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## **PRACTICAL PROSE READERS**



**PRACTICAL PROSE READERS**

*By* EDWARD ALBERT M A

BOOK I 224 pages

BOOK II 272 pages

BOOK III 286 pages

*Prospectus on application*

# PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

*By*

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"A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE" ETC

BOOK III



GEORGE G. HARRAP & COMPANY LTD.  
LONDON TORONTO BOMBAY SYDNEY

*First published 1938*  
by GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD  
182 High Holborn, London, W. C. 1  
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*Made in Great Britain. Printed by Butler & Tanner Ltd  
Frome and London*

## PREFACE

A FEW words may not be out of place here, to justify the use of the word 'practical' in connexion with this series of readers

In the preparation of them, the work of the practical teacher has been kept steadily in view. The contents of each volume have been divided into the three normal subdivisions of the school year—the winter, the spring, and the summer terms. The number of extracts allotted to each term corresponds approximately to the normal amount of reading in each. Further, the nature of the material corresponds, in some degree, to the season. A glance at the table of contents will show this.

Secondly, as to the nature of the extracts. Within the limits of each term is supplied a sufficiently judicious mixture of material. Some passages are easier, others are more difficult. Some are narrative, others are descriptive. All are, however, intended to be of a nature interesting to the pupil, and of a length suitable to the teaching-period.

At this point it should be noted that so-called 'hackneyed' passages are never omitted simply because they are hackneyed to older people. It should not be forgotten that what is often stale to a teacher is fresh and wonderful to a young mind approaching it for the first time.

Lastly, a word about the exercises. It is hoped that they will be used with a due sense of discrimination. They are not attached to every extract, but to those that offer scope and opportunity for them. In this way the 'recreational' nature of some of the lessons is tactfully acknowledged;

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while, even with the exercises attached, the sterner features of the other passages are not unduly accentuated.

Acknowledgments are tendered to the following for permission to reprint copyright extracts Mr H G Wells, for "Quap," from *Tono-Bungay*, the representatives of the late Arnold Bennett, for "At the Pottery," from *Anna of the Five Towns*, Messrs J M Dent & Sons, Ltd, for "Florence Nightingale," from A G Gardiner's *Prophets, Priests, and Kings*, the proprietors and Messrs Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd, for O Henry's "The Last Leaf", Messrs R Cobden-Sanderson, Ltd, for "Out of the Line," from Mr Edmund Blunden's *Undertones of War*, and Messrs John Murray for "The Last March," from Captain Scott's *Last Expedition*

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***WINTER TERM***





## H. G. WELLS

### *Tono-Bungay*

H G WELLS (born 1866) was, to begin with, a science-student and teacher, but his books have raised him to be one of the foremost figures in English literature. His earliest novels were scientific romances, such as *The Invisible Man* (1897) and *The Food of the Gods* (1904).

From this stage his work developed into the domestic type of novel, with a strong social interest, examples being *Kipps* (1905) and *The History of Mr Polly* (1910). This stage reached its culmination in the long and powerful story, *Tono-Bungay* (1909), from which an extract is here given.

*Tono-Bungay*, one of the greatest novels of its time, is really a satire upon modern commercial methods. It deals with the life and adventures of a commercial fortune-hunter, who, by means of a quack medicine called Tono-Bungay, mounts to the summits of financial success, only in the end to be hurled into ruin. The story is told by his nephew, George Ponderevo, who, at the beginning of the book, is a science-student, and who becomes his uncle's chief assistant and colleague.

The given extract is an episode that occurs late in the book. Already, after a meteoric period of success, the vast commercial schemes of the Ponderevo firm are beginning to totter. In an effort to redeem their fortunes, George sets out for Africa to purloin a shipload of a valuable substance called 'quap'.

## QUAP

### I

THE odd fish that came to us<sup>1</sup> And among others came Gordon-Nasmyth, that queer blend of romance and illegality who was destined to drag me into the most irrelevant adventure in my life, the Mordet Island affair, and leave me, as they say, with blood upon my hands. It is remarkable how little it troubles my conscience and how much it stirs my imagination, that particular memory of the life I took. The story of Mordet Island has been told in a Government report and told all wrong; there are still excellent reasons for leaving it wrong in places, but the liveliest appeals of discretion forbid my leaving it out altogether.

I've still the vividdest memory of Gordon-Nasmyth's appearance in the inner sanctum, a lank, sunburnt person in tweeds with a yellow-brown, hatchet face and one faded blue eye—the other was a closed and sunken lid—and how he told us with a stiff affectation of ease his incredible story of this great heap of quap that lay abandoned or undiscovered on the beach behind Mordet's Island among white dead mangroves and the black ooze of brackish water.

"What's quap?" said my uncle on the fourth repetition of the word.

"They call it quap, or quab, or quabb," said Gordon-Nasmyth; "but our relations weren't friendly enough to get the accent right. . . . But there the stuff is for the taking. They don't know about it. Nobody knows about it. I got down to the damned place in a canoe alone. The boys wouldn't come. I pretended to be botanizing." . . .

## QUAP

To begin with, Gordon-Nasmyth was inclined to be dramatic.

"Look here," he said when he first came in, shutting the door rather carefully behind him as he spoke, "do you two men—yes or no—want to put up six thousand—for a clear good chance of fifteen hundred per cent on your money in a year?"

"We're always getting chances like that," said my uncle, cocking his cigar offensively, wiping his glasses and tilting his chair back. "We stick to a safe twenty."

Gordon-Nasmyth's quick temper showed in a slight stiffening of his attitude

"Don't you believe him," said I, getting up before he could reply "You're different, and I know your books. We're very glad you've come to us. Confound it, uncle! It's Gordon-Nasmyth! Sit down. What is it? Minerals?"

"Quap," said Gordon-Nasmyth, fixing his eye on me, "in heaps."

"In heaps," said my uncle softly, with his glasses very oblique

"You're only fit for the grocery," said Gordon-Nasmyth scornfully, sitting down and helping himself to one of my uncle's cigars. "I'm sorry I came. But, still, now I'm here. And first as to quap; quap, sir, is the most radio-active stuff in the world. That's quap! It's a festering mass of earths and heavy metals, polonium, radium, ythorium, thorium, carium, and new things too. There's a stuff called Xk—provisionally. There they are, mucked up together in a sort of rotting sand. What it is, how it got made, I don't know. It's like as if some young creator had been playing about there. There it lies in two heaps, one small, one great, and the world for miles about it is blasted and scorched and dead. You can have it for the getting. You've got to take it—that's all!" . . .

"That sounds all right," said I. "Have you samples?"

"Well—*should* I? You can have anything—up to two ounces."

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"Where is it?" . . .

His blue eye smiled at me and scrutinized me. He smoked and was fragmentary for a time, fending off my questions; then his story began to piece itself together. He conjured up a vision of this strange forgotten kink in the world's littoral, of the long meandering channels that spread and divaricate and spend their burthen of mud and silt within the thunder-belt of Atlantic surf, of the dense tangled vegetation that creeps into the shimmering water with root and sucker. He gave a sense of heat and a perpetual reek of vegetable decay, and told how at last comes a break among these things, an arena fringed with bone-white dead trees, a sight of the hard blue sea-line beyond the dazzling surf and a wide desolation of dirty shingle and mud, bleached and scarred. A little way off among charred dead weeds stands the abandoned station—abandoned because every man who stayed two months at that station stayed to die, eaten up mysteriously like a leper—with its dismantled sheds and its decaying pier of worm-rotten and oblique piles and planks, still insecurely possible. And in the midst, two clumsy heaps shaped like the backs of hogs, one small, one great, sticking out under a rib of rock that cuts the space across—quap!

"There it is," said Gordon-Nasmyth, "worth three pounds an ounce, if it's worth a penny; two great heaps of it, rotten stuff and soft, ready to shovel and wheel, and you may get it by the ton!"

"How did it get there?"

"God knows!" . . . There it is—for the taking! In a country where you mustn't trade. In a country where the company waits for good kind men to find its riches and then take 'em away from 'em. There you have it—derelect."

"Can't you do any sort of deal?"

"They're too damned stupid. You've got to go and take it. That's all."

"They might catch you."

## QUAP

"They might, of course But they're not great at catching"

We went into the particulars of that difficulty. "They wouldn't catch me, because I'd sink first Give me a yacht," said Gordon-Nasmyth, "that's all I need"

"But if you get caught," said my uncle

I am inclined to think Gordon-Nasmyth imagined we would give him a cheque for six thousand pounds on the strength of his talk It was very good talk, but we didn't do that I stipulated for samples of his stuff for analysis, and he consented—reluctantly I think, on the whole, he would rather I didn't examine samples He made a motion pocketwards, that gave us an invincible persuasion that he had a sample upon him, and that at the last instant he decided not to produce it prematurely There was evidently a curious strain of secretiveness in him He didn't like to give us samples, and he wouldn't indicate within three hundred miles the position of this Mordet Island of his He had it clear in his mind that he had a secret of immense value, and he had no idea at all of just how far he ought to go with business people And so presently, to gain time for these hesitations of his, he began to talk of other things

All these African memories stand by themselves It was for me an expedition into the realms of undisciplined nature out of the world that is ruled by men, my first bout with that hot side of our mother that gives you the jungle—that cold side that gives you the air-eddy I was beginning to know passing well They are memories woven upon a fabric of sunshine and heat and a constant warm smell of decay They end in rain—such rain as I had never seen before, a vehement, a frantic downpouring of water, but our first slow passage through the channels behind Mordet's Island was an incandescent sunshine.

There we go in my memory still, a blistered dirty ship with patched sails and a battered mermaid to present *Maud Mary*, sounding and taking thought between high

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

banks of forest whose trees come out knee-deep at last in the water. There we go with a little breeze on our quarter, Mordet Island rounded and the quap it might be within a day of us

Here and there strange blossoms woke the dank intensities of green with a trumpet call of colour. Things crept among the jungle and peeped and dashed back rustling into stillness. Always in the sluggishly drifting, opaque water were eddyings and stirrings, little rushes of bubbles came chuckling up light-heartedly from this or that submerged conflict and tragedy; now and again were crocodiles like a stranded fleet of logs basking in the sun. Still it was by day, a dreary stillness broken only by insect sounds and the creaking and flapping of our progress, by the calling of the soundings and the Captain's confused shouts, but in the night as we lay moored to a clump of trees the darkness brought a thousand swampy things to life and out of the forest came screamings and howlings, screamings and yells that made us glad to be afloat. And once we saw between the tree stems long blazing fires. We passed two or three villages landward and brown-black women and children came and stared at us and gesticulated, and once a man came out in a boat from a creek and hailed us in an unknown tongue, and so at last we came to a great open place, a broad lake rimmed with a desolation of mud and bleached refuse and dead trees, free from crocodiles or water birds or sight or sound of any living thing, and saw far off, even as Nasmyth had described, the ruins of the deserted station and hard by two little heaps of buff-hued rubbish under a great rib of rock, the quap! The forest receded. The land to the right of us fell away and became barren, and far off across a notch in its backbone was surf and the sea.

We took the ship in towards those heaps and the ruined jetty slowly and carefully

I can witness that the beach and mud for two miles or

## QUAP

more either way was a lifeless beach—lifeless as I could have imagined no tropical mud could ever be, and all the dead branches and leaves and rotting dead fish and so forth that drifted ashore became presently shrivelled and white. Sometimes crocodiles would come up out of the water and bask, and now and then water birds would explore the mud and rocky ribs that rose out of it, in a mood of transitory speculation. That was its utmost animation. And the air felt at once hot and austere, dry and blistering, and altogether different to the warm moist embrace that had met us at our first African landfall and to which we had grown accustomed.

I believe that the primary influence of the quap upon us was to increase the conductivity of our nerves, but that is a mere unjustifiable speculation on my part. At any rate it gave a sort of east wind effect to life. We all became irritable, clumsy, languid and disposed to be impatient with our languor. We moored the brig to the rocks with difficulty, and got aground on mud, and decided to stick there and tow off when we had done—the bottom was as greasy as butter. Our efforts to fix up planks and sleepers in order to wheel the quap aboard were as ill conceived as that sort of work can be—and that sort of work can at times be very ill conceived. The Captain had a superstitious fear of his hold; he became wildly gesticulatory and expository and incompetent at the bare thought of it. His shouts still echo in my memory, becoming as each crisis approached less and less like any known tongue.

But I cannot now write the history of those days of blundering and toil, of how Milton, one of the boys, fell from a plank to the beach, thirty feet perhaps, with his barrow and broke his arm and I believe a rib, of how I and Pollack set the limb and nursed him through the fever that followed, of how one man after another succumbed to a feverish malaria, and how I—by virtue of my scientific reputation—was obliged to play the part of doctor and dose them with quinine, and then, finding



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that worse than nothing, with rum and small doses of Easton's Syrup, of which there chanced to be a case of bottles aboard—Heaven and Gordon-Nasmyth know why. For three long days we lay in misery and never shipped a barrow-load. Then, when they resumed, the men's hands broke out into sores. There were no gloves available, and I tried to get them, while they shovelled and wheeled, to cover their hands with stockings or greased rags. They would not do this on account of the heat and discomfort. This attempt of mine did, however, direct their attention to the quap as the source of their illness and precipitated what in the end finished our lading, an informal strike. "We've had enough of this," they said, and they meant it. They came aft to say as much. They cowed the Captain.

Through all these days the weather was variously vile, first a furnace heat under a sky of a scowling intensity of blue, then a hot fog that stuck in one's throat like wool and turned the men on the planks into colourless figures of giants, then a wild burst of thunderstorms, mad elemental uproar and rain. Through it all against illness, heat, confusion of mind, one master impetus prevailed with me, to keep the shipping going, to maintain one motif at least, whatever else arose or ceased, the chuff of the spades, the squeaking and shriek of the barrows, the pluppa, pluppa, pluppa, as the men came trotting along the swinging high planks, and then at last, the dollop, dollop as the stuff shot into the hold. "Another barrow-load, thank God! Another fifteen hundred, or it may be two thousand pounds, for the saving of Ponderevo!"

I found out many things about myself and humanity in those weeks of effort behind Mordet Island. I understand now the heart of the sweater, of the harsh employer, of the nigger-driver. I had brought these men into a danger they didn't understand, I was fiercely resolved to overcome their oppositions and bend and use them for my purpose, and I hated the men. But I hated all humanity during the time that the quap was near me. . .

## QUAP

And my mind was pervaded too by a sense of urgency and by the fear that we should be discovered and our proceedings stopped. I wanted to get out to sea again—to be beating up northward with our plunder. I was afraid our masts showed to seaward and might betray us to some curious passer on the high sea. And one evening near the end I saw a canoe with three natives far off down the lake, I got field-glasses from the Captain and scrutinized them, and I could see them staring at us. One man might have been a half-breed and was dressed in white. They watched us for some time very quietly and then paddled off into some channel in the forest shadows.

And for three nights running, so that it took a painful grip upon my inflamed imagination, I dreamt of my uncle's face, only that it was ghastly white like a clown's, and the throat was cut from ear to ear—a long ochreous cut. "Too late," he said, "too late!"

## II

A day or so after we had got to work upon the quap I found myself so sleepless and miserable that the ship became unendurable. Just before the rush of sunrise I borrowed Pollack's gun, walked down the planks, clambered over the quap heaps and prowled along the beach. I went perhaps a mile and a half that day and some distance beyond the ruins of the old station I became interested in the desolation about me, and found when I returned that I was able to sleep for nearly an hour. It was delightful to have been alone for so long—no captain, no Pollack, no one. Accordingly I repeated this expedition the next morning and the next until it became a custom with me. There was little for me to do once the digging and wheeling was organized, and so these prowlings of mine grew longer and longer, and presently I began to take food with me.

I pushed these walks far beyond the area desolated by the quap. On the edges of that was first a zone of stunted vegetation, then a sort of swampy jungle that was difficult

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to penetrate, and then the beginnings of the forest, a scene of huge tree stems and tangled creeper ropes and roots mingled with oozy mud. Here I used to loaf in a state between botanizing and reverie—always very anxious to know what was up above in the sunlight—and here it was I murdered a man.

It was the most unmeaning and purposeless murder imaginable. Even as I write down its well-remembered particulars there comes again the sense of its strangeness, its pointlessness, its incompatibility with any of the neat and definite theories people hold about life and the meaning of the world. I did this thing and I want to tell of my doing it, but why I did it and particularly why I should be held responsible for it I cannot explain.

That morning I had come upon a track in the forest and it had occurred to me as a disagreeable idea that this was a human pathway. I didn't want to come upon any human beings. The less our expedition saw of the African population the better for its prospects. Thus far we had been singularly free from native pestering. So I turned back and was making my way over mud and roots and dead fronds and petals scattered from the green world above when abruptly I saw my victim.

I became aware of him perhaps forty feet off standing quite still and regarding me.

He wasn't by any means a pretty figure. He was very black and naked except for a dirty loin-cloth, his legs were ill-shaped and his toes spread wide, and the upper edge of his cloth and a girdle of string cut his clumsy abdomen into folds. His forehead was low, his nose very flat, and his lower lip swollen and purplish red. His hair was short and fuzzy, and about his neck was a string and a little purse of skin. He carried a musket, and a powder flask was stuck in his girdle. It was a curious confrontation. There opposed to him stood I, a little soiled perhaps, but still a rather elaborately civilized human being born, bred and trained in a vague tradition. In my hand was an unaccustomed gun. And each of us was essentially a

## QUAP

teeming vivid brain, tensely excited by the encounter, quite unaware of the other's mental content or what to do with him.

He stepped back a pace or so. Stumbled and turned to run.

"Stop," I cried, "stop, you fool!" and started to run after him shouting such things in English. But I was no match for him over the roots and mud

I had a preposterous idea. "He mustn't get away and tell them!"

And with that instantly I brought both feet together, raised my gun, aimed quite coolly, drew the trigger carefully and shot him neatly in the back.

I saw, and saw with a leap of pure exaltation, the smash of my bullet between his shoulder blades "Got him," said I, dropping my gun, and down he flopped and died without a groan. "By Jove," I cried with a note of surprise, "I've killed him." I looked about me and then went forward cautiously in a mood between curiosity and astonishment to look at this man whose soul I had flung so unceremoniously out of our common world. I went to him not as one goes to something one has made or done, but as one approaches something found.

He was frightfully smashed out in front, he must have died in the instant. I stooped and raised him by his shoulder and realized that. I dropped him, and stood about and peered about me through the trees. "My word!" I said. He was the second dead human being—apart I mean from surgical properties and mummies and common shows of that sort—that I had ever seen. I stood over him wondering, wondering beyond measure.

A practical idea came into that confusion. Had any one heard the gun?

I reloaded.

After a time I felt securer, and gave my mind again to the dead I had killed. What must I do?

It occurred to me that perhaps I ought to bury him. At any rate, I ought to hide him. I reflected coolly, and

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then put my gun within easy reach and dragged him by the arm towards a place where the mud seemed soft, and thrust him in. His powder-flask slipped from his loin-cloth, and I went back to get it. Then I pressed him down with the butt of my rifle.

Afterwards this all seemed to me most horrible, but at the time it was entirely a matter-of-fact transaction. I looked round for any other visible evidence of his fate, looked round as one does when one packs one's portmanteau in an hotel bedroom.

Then I got my bearings, and carefully returned towards the ship. I had the mood of grave concentration of a boy who has lapsed into poaching. And the business only began to assume proper proportions for me as I got near the ship, to seem any other kind of thing than the killing of a bird or rabbit.

In the night, however, it took on enormous and portentous forms. "By God!" I cried suddenly, starting wide awake, "but it was murder!"

I lay after that wide awake, staring at my memories. In some odd way these visions mixed up with my dream of my uncle in his despair. The black body which I saw now damaged and partly buried, but which, nevertheless, I no longer felt was dead but acutely alive and perceiving, I mixed up with the ochreous slash under my uncle's face. I tried to dismiss this horrible obsession from my mind, but it prevailed over all my efforts.

The next day was utterly black with my sense of that ugly creature's body. I am the least superstitious of men, but it drew me. It drew me back into those thickets to the very place where I had hidden him.

Some evil and detestable beast had been at him, and he lay disinterred.

Methodically I buried his swollen and mangled carcass again, and returned to the ship for another night of dreams. Next day for all the morning I resisted the impulse to go to him, and played Nap with Pollack with my secret gnawing at me, and in the evening started to

## QUAP

go and was near benighted. I never told a soul of them of this thing I had done

Next day I went early and he had gone, and there were human footmarks and ugly stains round the muddy hole from which he had been dragged.

I returned to the ship, disconcerted and perplexed. That day it was the men came aft, with blistered hands and faces, and sullen eyes. When they proclaimed, through Edwards, their spokesman, "We've had enough of this, and we mean it," I answered very readily, "So have I. Let's go."

We were none too soon. People had been reconnoitring us, the telegraph had been at work, and we were not four hours at sea before we ran against the gunboat that had been sent down the coast to look for us and that would have caught us behind the island like a beast in a trap. It was a night of driving cloud that gave intermittent gleams of moonlight, the wind and sea were strong and we were rolling along through a drift of rain and mist. Suddenly the world was white with moonshine. The gunboat came out as a long dark shape wallowing on the water to the east. She sighted the *Maud Mary* at once, and fired some sort of popgun to arrest us.

The mate turned to me.

"Shall I tell the Captain?"

"The Captain be damned!" said I, and we let him sleep through two hours of chase till a rainstorm swallowed us up. Then we changed our course and sailed right across them, and by morning only her smoke was showing.

We were clear of Africa—and with the booty aboard I did not see what stood between us and home.

For the first time since I had fallen sick in the Thames my spirits rose. I was sea-sick and physically disgusted of course, but I felt kindly in spite of my qualms. So far as I could calculate then the situation was saved. I saw myself returning triumphantly into the Thames, and nothing on earth to prevent old Capern's Perfect Filament

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going on the market in a fortnight. I had the monopoly of electric lamps beneath my feet.

I was released from the spell of that blood-stained black body all mixed up with grey-black mud. I was going back to baths and decent food and aeronautics and Beatrice. I was going back to Beatrice and my real life again—out of this well into which I had fallen. It would have needed something more than sea-sickness and quap fever to prevent my spirits rising.

I told the Captain that I agreed with him that the British were the scum of Europe, the westward drift of all the people, a disgusting rabble, and I lost three pounds by attenuated retail to Pollack at ha'penny nap and euchre.

And then you know, as we got out into the Atlantic this side of Cape Verde, the ship began to go to pieces. I don't pretend for one moment to understand what happened. But I think Greiffenhagen's recent work on the effects of radium upon ligneous tissue does rather carry out my idea that emanations from quap have a rapid rotting effect upon woody fibre.

From the first there had been a different feel about the ship, and as the big winds and waves began to strain her she commenced leaking. Soon she was leaking—not at any particular point, but everywhere. She did not spring a leak, I mean, but water came in first of all near the decaying edges of her planks, and then through them.

I firmly believe the water came through the wood. First it began to ooze, then to trickle. It was like trying to carry moist sugar in a thin paper bag. Soon we were taking in water as though we had opened a door in her bottom.

Once it began, the thing went ahead beyond all fighting. For a day or so we did our best, and I can still remember in my limbs and back the pumping—the fatigue in my arms and the memory of a clear little dribble of water that jerked as one pumped, and of knocking off and the being awakened to go on again, and of fatigue piling up upon fatigue. At last we ceased to think of anything but

## QUAP

pumping; one became a thing of torment enchanted, doomed to pump for ever. I still remember it as pure relief when at last Pollack came to me pipe in mouth.

"The Captain says the damned thing's going down right now," he remarked, chewing his mouthpiece "Eh?"

"Good idea!" I said. "One can't go on pumping for ever"

And without hurry or alacrity, sullenly and wearily we got into the boats and pulled away from the *Maud Mary* until we were clear of her, and then we stayed resting on our oars, motionless upon a glassy sea, waiting for her to sink. We were all silent, even the Captain was silent until she went down. And then he spoke quite mildly in an undertone

"Dat is the first ship I haf ever lost. And it was not a fair game! It wass not a cargo any man should take. No!"

I stared at the slow eddies that circled above the departed *Maud Mary*, and the last chance of Business Organizations. I felt weary beyond emotion. I thought of my heroics to Beatrice and my uncle, of my prompt "I'll go," and of all the ineffectual months I had spent after this headlong decision. I was moved to laughter at myself and fate.

But the Captain and the men did not laugh. The men scowled at me and rubbed their sore and blistered hands, and set themselves to row.

As all the world knows, we were picked up by the Union Castle liner *Portland Castle*.

The hairdresser aboard was a wonderful man, and he even improvised me a dress suit, and produced a clean shirt and warm underclothing. I had a hot bath, and dressed and dined and drank a bottle of Burgundy.

"Now," I said, "are there any newspapers? I want to know what's been happening in the world."

My steward gave me what he had, but I landed at Plymouth still largely ignorant of the course of events. I shook off Pollack and left the Captain and mate in an



## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

hotel, and the men in a Sailors' Home until I could send to pay them off, and I made my way to the station.

The newspapers I bought, the placards I saw, all England indeed resounded to my uncle's bankruptcy.

### EXERCISES

1 *Realism* In his novels Mr Wells believes in describing things as they *really* are. This is called *realism*, as opposed to *romanticism*, which tries to make things look as they might be, or ought to be. In many cases, the desire for realism leads to squalid details, but this is no concern of the realist.

In our extract, show how the desire for realism appears in the description of (a) the African scenery and (b) the murdered African native.

On the other hand, Mr Wells does bring out the attractive side of African life. Point out the beautiful features that he describes. This is realism also, for the lovely side is as real as the unlovely.

2 *Précis* Summarize your impressions of Africa, as conveyed by the reading of this extract.

#### 3. *Interpretation*

(a) The narrator of this story is supposed to be a trained scientist. Point out any details that go to show this.

(b) "The primary influence of the quap upon us was to increase the conductivity of our nerves." What does this mean? Show how the course of the narrative bears this out.

4 *Composition* Write a composition of your own, describing your visit to a tropical region. Draw upon any books you have read.

## LORD MACAULAY

### *Frederick the Great*

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY (1800-59) was a lawyer who entered Parliament and took part in the great struggle over the Reform Act of 1832. Later he accepted an important legal appointment in India. After spending a few years in India he returned to England to busy himself with political and especially literary work. In 1857 he was created Baron Macaulay, with a seat in the House of Lords.

His great work was his *History of England*, only a large fragment of which was completed when he died. His *Essays*, which remain as the most popular part of his works, were contributed at various times to the *Quarterly Review* and the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. He writes with great vigour, and sometimes sacrifices accuracy to his desire to be vivid and alive.

Our extract is from his essay on Frederick the Great (1712-86), who became King of Prussia in 1740. Frederick's father, known as Frederick William, treated his son with great brutality. In the following passage Macaulay describes this with great gusto.

## THE BOYHOOD OF FREDERICK THE GREAT

**B**UT the mind of Frederic William was so ill regulated, that all his inclinations became passions, and all his passions partook of the character of moral and intellectual disease. His parsimony degenerated into sordid avarice. His taste for military pomp and order became a mania, like that of a Dutch burgomaster for tulips, or that of a member of the Roxburghe Club for Caxtons. While the envoys of the court of Berlin were in a state of such squalid poverty as moved the laughter of foreign capitals, while the food placed before the princes and princesses of the blood-royal of Prussia was too scanty to appease hunger, and so bad that even hunger loathed it, no price was thought too extravagant for tall recruits. The ambition of the King was to form a brigade of giants, and every country was ransacked by his agents for men above the ordinary stature. These researches were not confined to Europe. No head that towered above the crowd in the bazaars of Aleppo, of Cairo, or of Surat, could escape the crimps of Frederic William. One Irishman more than seven feet high, who was picked up in London by the Prussian ambassador, received a bounty of near thirteen hundred pounds sterling, very much more than the ambassador's salary. This extravagance was the more absurd, because a stout youth of five feet eight, who might have been procured for a few dollars, would in all probability have been a much more valuable soldier. But to Frederic William, this huge Irishman was what a brass Otho, or a Vinegar Bible, is to a collector of a different kind.

It is remarkable, that though the main end of Frederic

## THE BOYHOOD OF FREDERICK THE GREAT

William's administration was to have a great military force, though his reign forms an important epoch in the history of military discipline, and though his dominant passion was the love of military display, he was yet one of the most pacific of princes. We are afraid that his aversion to war was not the effect of humanity, but was merely one of his thousand whims. His feeling about his troops seems to have resembled a miser's feeling about his money. He loved to collect them, to count them, to see them increase, but he could not find it in his heart to break in upon the precious hoard. He looked forward to some future time when his Patagonian battalions were to drive hostile infantry before them like sheep, but this future time was always receding, and it is probable that, if his life had been prolonged thirty years, his superb army would never have seen any harder service than a sham fight in the fields near Berlin. But the great military means which he had collected were destined to be employed by a spirit far more daring and inventive than his own.

Frederic, surnamed the Great, son of Frederic William, was born in January 1712. It may safely be pronounced that he had received from nature a strong and sharp understanding, and a rare firmness of temper and intensity of will. As to the other parts of his character, it is difficult to say whether they are to be ascribed to nature, or to the strange training which he underwent. The history of his boyhood is painfully interesting. Oliver Twist in the parish workhouse, Smike at Dotheboys Hall, were petted children when compared with this heir apparent of a crown. The nature of Frederic William was hard and bad, and the habit of exercising arbitrary power had made him frightfully savage. His rage constantly vented itself to right and left in curses and blows. When his Majesty took a walk, every human being fled before him, as if a tiger had broken loose from a menagerie. If he met a lady in the street, he gave her a kick, and told her to go home and mind her brats. If he

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saw a clergyman staring at the soldiers, he admonished the reverend gentleman to betake himself to study and prayer, and enforced this pious advice by a sound caning, administered on the spot. But it was in his own house that he was most unreasonable and ferocious. His palace was hell, and he the most execrable of fiends, a cross between Moloch and Puck. His son Frederic and his daughter Wilhelmina, afterwards Margravine of Bayreuth, were in an especial manner objects of his aversion. His own mind was uncultivated. He despised literature. He hated infidels, papists, and metaphysicians, and did not very well understand in what they differed from each other. The business of life, according to him, was to drill and to be drilled. The recreations suited to a prince were to sit in a cloud of tobacco smoke, to sip Swedish beer between the puffs of the pipe, to play backgammon for three-halfpence a rubber, to kill wild hogs, and to shoot partridges by the thousand. The Prince Royal showed little inclination either for the serious employments or for the amusements of his father. He shirked the duties of the parade, he detested the fume of tobacco; he had no taste either for backgammon or for field sports. He had an exquisite ear, and performed skilfully on the flute. His earliest instructors had been French refugees, and they had awakened in him a strong passion for French literature and French society. Frederic William regarded these tastes as effeminate and contemptible, and, by abuse and persecution, made them still stronger. Things became worse when the Prince Royal attained that time of life at which the great revolution in the human mind and body takes place. He was guilty of some youthful indiscretions, which no good and wise parent would regard with severity. But the offences of his youth were not characterized by any peculiar turpitude. They excited, however, transports of rage in the King, who hated all faults except those to which he was himself inclined, and who conceived that he made ample atonement to Heaven, for his brutality, by holding the

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softer passions in detestation. The Prince Royal, too, was not one of those who are content to take their religion on trust. He asked puzzling questions, and brought forward arguments which seemed to savour of something different from pure Lutheranism. The King suspected that his son was inclined to be a heretic of some sort or other, whether Calvinist or Atheist his Majesty did not very well know. The ordinary malignity of Frederic William was bad enough. He now thought malignity a part of his duty as a Christian man, and all the conscience that he had stimulated his hatred. The flute was broken. the French books were sent out of the palace. the Prince was kicked and cudgelled, and pulled by the hair. At dinner the plates were hurled at his head. sometimes he was restricted to bread and water. sometimes he was forced to swallow food so nauseous that he could not keep it on his stomach. Once his father knocked him down, dragged him along the floor to a window, and was with difficulty prevented from strangling him with the cord of the curtain. The Queen, for the crime of not wishing to see her son murdered, was subjected to the grossest indignities. The Princess Wilhelmina, who took her brother's part, was treated almost as ill as Mrs Brownrigg's apprentices. Driven to despair, the unhappy youth tried to run away. Then the fury of the old tyrant rose to madness. The Prince was an officer in the army. his flight was therefore desertion, and, in the moral code of Frederic William, desertion was the highest of all crimes. "Desertion," says this royal theologian, in one of his half-crazy letters, "is from hell. It is a work of the children of the Devil. No child of God could possibly be guilty of it." An accomplice of the Prince, in spite of the recommendation of a court-martial, was mercilessly put to death. It seemed probable that the Prince himself would suffer the same fate. It was with difficulty that the intercession of the States of Holland, of the Kings of Sweden and Poland, and of the Emperor of Germany, saved the House of Brandenburg from the stain of an un-

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natural murder. After months of cruel suspense, Frederic learned that his life would be spared. He remained, however, long a prisoner; but he was not on that account to be pitied. He found in his gaolers a tenderness which he had never found in his father, his table was not sumptuous, but he had wholesome food in sufficient quantity to appease hunger; he could read the *Henriade* without being kicked, and could play on his flute without having it broken over his head.

When his confinement terminated he was a man. He had nearly completed his twenty-first year, and could scarcely be kept much longer under the restraints which had made his boyhood miserable. Suffering had matured his understanding, while it had hardened his heart and soured his temper. He had learnt self-command and dissimulation, he affected to conform to some of his father's views, and submissively accepted a wife, who was a wife only in name, from his father's hand. He also served with credit, though without any opportunity of acquiring brilliant distinction, under the command of Prince Eugène, during a campaign marked by no extraordinary events. He was now permitted to keep a separate establishment, and was therefore able to indulge with caution his own tastes. Partly in order to conciliate the King, and partly, no doubt, from inclination, he gave up a portion of his time to military and political business, and thus gradually acquired such an aptitude for affairs as his most intimate associates were not aware that he possessed.

## EXERCISES

1. *Vocabulary.* Show that you know the meaning of the following words by using them in sentences of your own composition

mania, squalid, extravagant; bounty; epoch; dominant; intensity, pious, ferocious; aversion; metaphysicians, recreations, exquisite; refugees, indiscretions; atonement; heretic; malignity, nauseous; accomplice; intercession; sumptuous; dissimulation; distinction.

## THE BOYHOOD OF FREDERICK THE GREAT

2 *Meanings* Explain the following, including the literary and other references

- (a) His taste for military pomp and order became a mania, like that of a Dutch burgomaster for tulips, or that of a member of the Roxburghe Club for Caxtons
- (b) No head that towered above the crowd in the bazaars of Aleppo, of Cairo, or of Surat, could escape the crimps of Frederic William
- (c) This huge Irishman was what a brass Otho, or a Vinegar Bible, is to a collector of a different kind
- (d) He was yet one of the most pacific of princes
- (e) His Patagonian battalions
- (f) Oliver Twist in the parish workhouse, Smike at Dotheboys Hall, were petted children when compared with this heir apparent of a crown
- (g) The habit of exercising arbitrary power
- (h) The offences of his youth were not characterized by any peculiar turpitude
- (i) The Queen was subjected to the grossest indignities
- (j) He affected to conform to some of his father's views

3 *Précis* Summarize what you have gathered of Frederick's character in the extract

4 *Interpretation* Quote details from the extract to illustrate the following statements from Macaulay Do you think that any of these statements are exaggerated?

- (a) His taste for military pomp and order became a mania
- (b) He was yet one of the most pacific of princes.
- (c) His palace was hell, and he the most execrable of fiends



A G. GARDINER

*Prophets, Priests, and Kings*

A G GARDINER is a distinguished journalist who, in 1902, became editor of the *Daily News*, the famous newspaper that was started in 1846 under the editorship of Charles Dickens. Many of his best articles in this paper were afterwards issued in volume form.

One of the best known of such collections was called *Prophets, Priests, and Kings*, from which our essay is taken. It is clear that the article was written before the death of Miss Nightingale, which took place in 1910.

Miss Harriet Martineau, whose previous article on Miss Nightingale provides the starting-point of Mr Gardiner's essay, was a well-known writer at one time. She contributed regularly to the *Daily News* between the years 1852 and 1866.

## FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

L YING before me is a manuscript. It is written on large sheets of stout paper which have turned yellow with the years. The writing, that of a woman, is bold and free, as of one accustomed to the pen, but the fashion of the letters belongs to a long-past time. It is an obituary notice of Florence Nightingale, written for the *Daily News* fifty-one years ago, when the most famous of Englishwomen was at the point of death. The faded manuscript has lain in its envelope for half a century unused. The busy pen that wrote it fell for ever from the hand of the writer more than thirty years ago, for that writer was Harriet Martineau. The subject of the memoir still lives, the most honoured and loved of all the subjects of the Sovereign.

There are tears in that old manuscript, the generous, almost passionate, tears of a great soul stricken by a sore bereavement. Miss Martineau was writing within three years of the Crimean war, when the name of Florence Nightingale still throbbed with memories vivid as last night's dream, and when her heroism had the dew of the dawn upon it. To-day that name is like a melody of a far-off time—a melody we heard in the remotest days of childhood. Florence Nightingale!

It comes o'er the ear like the sweet South,  
Stealing and giving odour

It has perfumed the years with the fragrance of gracious deeds. I have sometimes idly speculated on the strange fortuity of names, on the perfect echo of the name to the deed—Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson!

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Why is it that the world's singers come heralded with these significant names? Why is it that the infinite families of the Smiths and the Robinsons and the Joneses never sing? And Oliver Cromwell and John Churchill and Horatio Nelson! Why, there is the roar of guns and the thunder of great deeds in the very accents of their names. And so with the heroines of history, the Grace Darlings and the Florence Nightingales. One almost sees in the latter case events carefully avoiding the commonplace and shaping a lustrous name for the wearer. For her mother was named Smith, the daughter of that William Smith, the famous philanthropist, and member for Norwich, who fought the battle of the Dissenters in Parliament, and was one of the leaders of the anti-slavery movement. And her father was named Shore, and only assumed the name of Nightingale with the estates that made him a wealthy man. "A rose by any other name," no doubt. But the world is grateful for the happy accident that gave it "Florence Nightingale."

It is a name full of a delicate reminiscence, like the smell of lavender in a drawer, calling up memories of those from whose lips we first heard the story of "The Lady with the Lamp." It suggests not a personality, but an influence, not a presence, but a pervasive spirit. For since that tremendous time, when the eyes of the whole world were turned upon the gentle figure that moved like a benediction through the horrors of the hospitals of Scutari, Miss Nightingale's life has had something of the quiet of the cloister. It is not merely that her health was finally broken by her unexampled labours. It is that, combined with the courage of the chivalrous world into which she was born, she has the reticence of a temperament that shrinks from publicity with mingled scorn and humility.

This rare union of courage and modesty is illustrated by her whole career. When, after a girlhood spent in her native Italy—for she was born in Florence, as her only sister, afterwards Lady Verney, was born in Naples—and

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in wanderings in many lands, she decided on her life work of nursing, she returned from her hard apprenticeship in many institutions, and especially in the Kaiserswerth Institution on the Rhine—the first Protestant nursing home in Germany—to take the management of the Sanatorium for Sick Ladies in Harley Street. In those days of our grandmothers, woman was still in the mediæval state of development. She was a pretty ornament of the drawing-room, subject to all the properties expressed in “prunes and prisms.” She had no duty except the duty of being pretty and proper, no part in the work of the world except the task higher than that of seeing that her overlord’s slippers were in the right place.

The advent of Florence Nightingale into Harley Street was like a challenge to all that was feminine and Early Victorian. A woman, a lady of birth and culture, as manager of an institution! The thing was impossible. The polite world thrilled with indignation at the outrage. “It was related at the time”—I quote from the yellow manuscript before me—“that if she had forged a bill, or eloped, or betted her father’s fortune away at Newmarket, she could not have provoked a more virulent hue and cry than she did by settling herself to a useful work.” And it was not society alone that assailed her now and later. “From the formalists at home, who were shocked at her handling keys and keeping accounts, to the jealous and quizzing doctors abroad, who would have suppressed her altogether, and the vulgar among the nurses, who whispered that she ate the jams and the jellies in a corner, she had all the hostility to encounter which the great may always expect from those who are too small to apprehend their mind and ways.” But she had a dominating will and a clear purpose in all the acts of her life. She was indifferent to the judgment of the world. She saw the path, and trod it with fearless steps wherever it led.

Within her sphere she was an autocrat. Lord Stanmore, in his *Memoir of Sidney Herbert*—the War Minister whose letter inviting Miss Nightingale to go to the Crimea

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crossed her letter offering to go—has criticized her severe tongue and defiance of authority. But in the presence of the appalling problem of humanity that faced her and her band of thirty-eight nurses, what were red tape and authority? As she passed down through those four miles of beds, eighteen inches apart, each bearing its burden of pain and suffering, her passion of pity turned to a passion of indignation at the wanton neglect of the poor instruments of government, and she turned and rent the authors of the wrong. The hospital was chaos. There were neither hospital accessories, nor medical appliances, nor changes of clothing, nor proper food. It was a time for bitter speech and defiance of authority. And Florence Nightingale, her sight seared and her ears ringing with the infinite agony, thundered at the War Office until the crime was undone and her own powerful control was set up over all the hospitals of the East.

And now the war is over, the long avenue of death and suffering that has been her home has vanished, and she sets sail for England. The world is ringing with her deeds. England awaits her with demonstrations of national gratitude unparalleled in history. She takes an assumed name, steals back by an unexpected route, and escapes, exhausted and unrecognized, to the peace of her father's house at Lea Hurst, in the quiet valley of the Derwent. And when later the nation expresses its thanks by raising a fund of £50,000 for her benefit, she quietly hands it over to found the institution for training nurses at St Thomas's Hospital. And with that act of radiant unselfishness she establishes the great modern movement of nursing. Mrs Gamp flees for ever before the lady with the lamp.

For Florence Nightingale is not a mere figure of romance. It is beautiful to think of the ministering angel moving with her lamp down the long lanes of pain at Scutari, to hear those pathetic stories of the devotion of the rough soldiers all writing down her name as the name they loved, of the dying boy who wanted to

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see her pass because he could kiss her shadow as it moved across the pillow. But there have been many noble and self-sacrificing nurses, many who had as great a passion for suffering humanity as hers. To think of her only as a heroine in the romance of life is to mistake her place in history as well as to offend her deepest feelings.

She is much more than a heroine of romance. She is the greatest woman of action this nation produced in the last century—perhaps the greatest woman of action this country has ever produced. She is the type of the pioneer—one of those rare personalities who reshape the contours of life. She was not simply the lady with the lamp; she was the lady with the brain and the tyrannic will, and in her we may discover the first clear promise of that woman's revolution which plays so large a part in the world to-day. The hand that smoothed the hot pillow of the sufferer was the same hand that rent the red tape and broke, defiant of officialism, the locked door to get at the bedding within. Nursing to her was not a pastime or an occupation—it was a revelation. The child, whose dolls were always sick and being wooed back to life, who doctored the shepherd's dog in the valley of the Derwent, and bound up her boy cousin's sudden wound, was born with the fever of revolution in her as truly as a Danton or a Mazzini. She saw the world full of suffering, and beside the pillow—ignorance and Sarah Gamp. Her soul revolted against the grim spectacle, and she gave herself with single-eyed devotion to the task of reform.

There is about her something of the sleepless fury of the fanatic; but she differs from the fanatic in this, that her mighty indignation is controlled by her powerful understanding and by her cold, almost icy common sense. She has been the subject of more sentimental writing than any one of her time; but she is the least sentimental of women, and has probably dissolved fewer emotions in tears than any of her contemporaries. She has had something better to do with her emotions than waste them in easy lamentations. She has turned them to iron and

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used them mercilessly to break down the stupidities that encompass the world of physical suffering and to crush the opposition of ignorance and professional interest. All who have come in conflict with her have, like Sidney Herbert, had to bow to her despotic will, and to-day, old and lonely, forgotten by the great world that ebbs and flows by her home near Hyde Park corner, she works with the same governed passion and concentration that she revealed in the great tragedy of sixty years ago.

Truly seen, therefore, the Crimean episode is only an incident in her career. Her title to rank among the great figures of history would have been as unchallengeable without that tremendous chapter. For her work was not incidental, but fundamental, not passing, but permanent. She, too, divides the crown with "Old Timotheus"—

He raised a mortal to the skies,  
She brought an angel down

When good Pastor Fleidner, the head of the Kaiserswerth Institution, laid his hands at parting on her bowed head, she went forth to work a revolution, and to-day every nurse that sits through the dim hours by the restless bed of pain is in a real sense the gracious product of that revolution.

She has made nursing a science. She has given it laws, she has revealed the psychology of suffering. How true, for example, is this "I have seen in fevers the most acute suffering produced from the patient in a hut not being able to see out of a window. . . . I remember in my own case a nosegay of wild flowers being sent me, and from that moment recovery becoming more rapid. People say it is the effect on the patient's mind. It is no such thing, it is on the patient's body, too. . . . Volumes are now written and spoken about the effect of the mind on the body. . . . I wish more was thought of the effect of the body on the mind."

She has moved mountains, but her ideal is still far off. For she wants not merely a profession of nurses, but a

## FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

nation of nurses—every mother a health nurse and every nurse “an atom in the hierarchy of the Ministers of the Highest.” It is a noble dream, and she has brought it within the grasp of the realities of that future which, as she says, “I shall not see, for I am old”

I put the yellow manuscript back into the envelope where it has lain for half a century. Sixteen hundred articles did Harriet Martineau write for the *Daily News*. They are buried in the bound volumes of the issues of long ago. One still remains unpublished, the last word happily still unwritten.

### EXERCISES

1 *Interpretation*. By referring to details mentioned in the extract, tell what is meant by the following

- (a) The perfect echo of the name to the deed
- (b) The horrors of the hospitals of Scutari
- (c) The advent of Florence Nightingale into Harley Street was like a challenge to all that was feminine and Early Victorian
- (d) Within her sphere she was an autocrat
- (e) Florence Nightingale is not a mere figure of romance
- (f) The Crimean episode is only an incident in her career
- (g) One still remains unpublished, the last word happily still unwritten

2 *Literature*. What are the literary references in the following allusions and quotations?

- (a) It comes o'er the ear
- (b) A rose by any other name
- (c) Prunes and prisms
- (d) Mrs Gamp flees for ever before the lady with the lamp
- (e) Old Timotheus

3 *Composition*

- (a) Partly from the given essay, and partly from your own reading, write a straightforward life of Florence Nightingale
- (b) Write an essay on any other heroine in real life (One is mentioned in the essay)
- (c) Describe the Crimean War, and Florence Nightingale's share in it
- (d) Write an essay on “Nursing as a Profession”



## JANE AUSTEN

### *Pride and Prejudice*

JANE AUSTEN (1775-1817) was the daughter of a Hampshire clergyman, and she passed most of her uneventful life in the south of England. Her novels, all of which deal with the lives of ordinary people, were not of the kind to attract immediate attention, and during her lifetime her work went almost unnoticed. Succeeding generations, however, have amply recognized the veracity, penetration, and quiet humour of her studies of people and events.

*Pride and Prejudice* (1797), generally considered to be her finest novel, is represented in the following extract. Elizabeth Bennet, the chief character in the book, is a quiet and unassuming young lady, as all the best young ladies were in those days. But, like Jane Austen herself, she does not lack a native shrewdness and humour. In the following extract, observe how the authoress deftly touches off the vanity and pomposity of the clergyman, Mr Collins.

## AN OFFER OF MARRIAGE

THE next day opened a new scene at Longbourn. Mr Collins made his declaration in form. Having resolved to do it without loss of time, as his leave of absence extended only to the following Saturday, and having no feelings of diffidence to make it distressing to himself even at the moment, he set about it in a very orderly manner, with all the observances which he supposed a regular part of the business. On finding Mrs Bennet, Elizabeth, and one of the younger girls together, soon after breakfast, he addressed the mother in these words :

" May I hope, madam, for your interest with your fair daughter Elizabeth, when I solicit for the honour of a private audience with her in the course of this morning? "

Before Elizabeth had time for anything but a blush of surprise, Mrs Bennet instantly answered .

" Oh dear !—Yes—certainly I am sure Lizzy will be very happy—I am sure she can have no objection. Come, Kitty, I want you upstairs " And gathering her work together, she was hastening away, when Elizabeth called out .

" Dear ma'am, do not go I beg you will not go Mr Collins must excuse me. He can have nothing to say to me that anybody need not hear. I am going away myself."

" No, no, nonsense, Lizzy I desire you will stay where you are." And upon Elizabeth's seeming really, with vexed and embarrassed looks, about to escape, she added, " Lizzy, I *insist* upon your staying and hearing Mr Collins "

Elizabeth would not oppose such an injunction—and a

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moment's consideration making her also sensible that it would be wisest to get it over as soon and as quietly as possible, she sat down again, and tried to conceal by incessant employment the feelings which were divided between distress and diversion Mrs Bennet and Kitty walked off, and as soon as they were gone Mr Collins began

"Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty, so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds to your other perfections You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there *not* been this little unwillingness, but allow me to assure you that I have your respected mother's permission for this address. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse, however your natural delicacy may lead you to dissemble, my attentions have been too marked to be mistaken Almost as soon as I entered the house I singled you out as the companion of my future life But before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject, perhaps it would be advisable for me to state my reasons for marrying—and moreover for coming into Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife, as I certainly did "

The idea of Mr Collins, with all his solemn composure, being run away with by his feelings, made Elizabeth so near laughing that she could not use the short pause he allowed in any attempt to stop him further, and he continued.

"My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish Secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness, and thirdly—which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier—that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked too!) on this subject; and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford—between our pools at quadrille, while Mrs Jenkinson was arranging Miss de Bourgh's footstool—that

## AN OFFER OF MARRIAGE

she said, ' Mr Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry. Choose properly, choose a gentlewoman for *my* sake, and for your *own*, let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way ' This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her ' Allow me, by the way, to observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer You will find her manners beyond anything I can describe, and your wit and vivacity I think must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite Thus much for my general intention in favour of matrimony; it remains to be told why my views were directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighbourhood, where I assure you there are many amiable young women But the fact is, that being, as I am, to inherit this estate after the death of your honoured father (who, however, may live many years longer), I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little as possible, when the melancholy event takes place—which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affection To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with, and that one thousand pounds in the four per cents. which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent, and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married "

It was absolutely necessary to interrupt him now.

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

"You are too hasty, sir," she cried. "You forget that I have made no answer. Let me do it without further loss of time. Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me. I am very sensible of the honour of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them."

"I am not now to learn," replied Mr Collins, with a formal wave of the hand, "that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favour, and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second or even a third time. I am therefore by no means discouraged by what you have just said, and shall hope to lead you to the altar ere long."

"Upon my word, sir," cried Elizabeth, "your hope is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so. Nay, were your friend Lady Catherine to know me I am persuaded she would find me in every respect ill qualified for the situation."

"Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so," said Mr Collins very gravely—"but I cannot imagine that her ladyship would at all disapprove of you. And you may be certain that when I have the honour of seeing her again I shall speak in the highest terms of your modesty, economy, and other amiable qualifications."

"Indeed, Mr Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary. You must give me leave to judge for myself, and pay me the compliment of believing what I say. I wish you very happy and very rich, and by refusing your hand, do all in my power to prevent your being otherwise. In making me the offer, you must have satisfied the delicacy of your feelings with regard to my family, and

## AN OFFER OF MARRIAGE

may take possession of Longbourn estate whenever it falls, without any self-reproach. This matter may be considered, therefore, as finally settled." And rising as she thus spoke, she would have quitted the room, had not Mr Collins thus addressed her :

" When I do myself the honour of speaking to you next on the subject I shall hope to receive a more favourable answer than you have now given me ; though I am far from accusing you of cruelty at present, because I know it to be the established custom of your sex to reject a man on the first application, and perhaps you have even now said as much to encourage my suit as would be consistent with the true delicacy of the female character "

" Really, Mr Collins," cried Elizabeth with some warmth, " you puzzle me exceedingly. If what I have hitherto said can appear to you in the form of encouragement, I know not how to express my refusal in such a way as may convince you of its being one "

" You must give me leave to flatter myself, my dear cousin, that your refusal of my addresses is merely words of course. My reasons for believing it are briefly these. It does not appear to me that my hand is unworthy your acceptance, or that the establishment I can offer would be any other than highly desirable. My situation in life, my connexions with the family of De Bourgh, and my relationship to your own, are circumstances highly in my favour ; and you should take it into further consideration that in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made you. Your portion is unhappily so small that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications. As I must therefore conclude that you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall choose to attribute it to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females."

" I do assure you, sir, that I have no pretensions whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tor-

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

menting a respectable man. I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere. I thank you again and again for the honour you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female intending to plague you, but as a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart."

"You are uniformly charming!" cried he, with an air of awkward gallantry; "and I am persuaded that when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents, my proposals will not fail of being acceptable."

To such perseverance in wilful self-deception Elizabeth would make no reply, and immediately and in silence withdrew, determined, that if he persisted in considering her repeated refusals as flattering encouragement, to apply to her father, whose negative might be uttered in such a manner as must be decisive, and whose behaviour at least could not be mistaken for the affectation and coquetry of an elegant female.

### EXERCISES

1 *Vocabulary* The language of Mr Collins, which would appear ludicrous to a modern ear, is hardly an exaggeration of that prevailing in the eighteenth century. Here are some of Mr Collins's expressions and words, put them more simply

delicacy, the purpose of my discourse, dissemble, in easy circumstances, matrimony, vivacity, acceptable, animated, de cease, elegant female

2 *Interpretation*

(a) Jane Austen's book is called *Pride and Prejudice*. In the extract, how far does Mr Collins exhibit 'pride' and 'prejudice'?

(b) Rewrite in simple modern prose the paragraph "You must give me leave" . (P. 47)

3 *Grammar* Sentences to analyse .

(a) Having resolved to do it (P. 43)

(b) You will find her manners (P. 45)

(c) But the fact is (P. 45)

(d) To fortune I am . . (P. 45)

## THOMAS DE QUINCEY

### *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*

THOMAS DE QUINCEY (1785-1859) is an example of a man whose brilliant powers were largely wasted through his own folly. While he was still a student at Oxford he began to take opium, it is said to relieve the pains of toothache. Throughout his life, to a greater or less degree, the vice haunted him. In consequence of this, and in spite of his great literary ability, he wrote only one work of any importance.

This book, moreover, owes its very existence to his own unhappy experiences. *Confessions of an English Opium-eater* began to appear, serially and anonymously, in the *London Magazine* in 1827, and it soon attracted wide attention. Taken as a whole, the 'confessions' are little more than a series of visions, disconnected, vague, and unsatisfactory, as all visions must be. The best passages, however, stand at the summit of English prose.

The following pages provide two extracts, loosely connected. The first describes a Malay, who may be real or fictitious, appearing at the door of De Quincey's cottage near Ambleside, in the Lake District. The second describes the dream suggested by the appearance of the Malay.

In both passages should be noted the beautiful pictorial effects and the noble solemnity of the language.



## THE MALAY

ONE day a Malay knocked at my door. What business a Malay could have to transact among English mountains, I cannot conjecture, but possibly he was on his way to a seaport about forty miles distant.

The servant who opened the door to him was a young girl born and bred amongst the mountains, who had never seen an Asiatic dress of any sort, his turban, therefore, confounded her not a little, and, as it turned out that his attainments in English were exactly of the same extent as hers in the Malay, there seemed to be an impassable gulf fixed between all communication of ideas, if either party had happened to possess any. In this dilemma, the girl, recollecting the reputed learning of her master (and, doubtless, giving me credit for a knowledge of all the languages of the earth, besides, perhaps, a few of the lunar ones), came and gave me to understand that there was a sort of demon below, whom she clearly imagined that my art could exorcise from the house. I did not immediately go down, but, when I did, the group which presented itself, arranged as it was by accident, though not very elaborate, took hold of my fancy and my eye in a way that none of the statuesque attitudes exhibited in the ballets at the Opera House, though so ostentatiously complex, had ever done. In a cottage kitchen, but panelled on the wall with dark wood that from age and rubbing resembled oak, and looking more like a rustic hall of entrance than a kitchen, stood the Malay—his turban and loose trousers of dingy white relieved upon the dark panelling: he had placed himself nearer to the girl than she seemed to relish; though her native spirit of moun-

## THE MALAY

tain intrepidity contended with the feeling of simple awe which her countenance expressed as she gazed upon the tiger-cat before her. And a more striking picture there could not be imagined than the beautiful English face of the girl, and its exquisite fairness, together with her erect and independent attitude, contrasted with the sallow and bilious skin of the Malay, enamelled or veneered with mahogany by marine air, his small fierce restless eyes, thin lips, slavish gestures and adorations. Half-hidden by the ferocious-looking Malay was a little child from a neighbouring cottage, who had crept in after him, and was now in the act of reverting its head, and gazing upwards at the turban and the fiery eyes beneath it, whilst with one hand he caught at the dress of the young woman for protection.

My knowledge of the Oriental tongues is not remarkably extensive, being indeed confined to two words—the Arabic word for barley, and the Turkish for opium (*madjoon*), which I have learned from Anastasius. And, as I had neither a Malay dictionary, nor even Adelung's *Mithridates*, which might have helped me to a few words, I addressed him in some lines from the *Iliad*, considering that, of such languages as I possessed, Greek, in point of longitude, came geographically nearest to an Oriental one. He worshipped me in a most devout manner, and replied in what I suppose was Malay. In this way I saved my reputation with my neighbours; for the Malay had no means of betraying the secret.

He lay down upon the floor for about an hour, and then pursued his journey. On his departure I presented him with a piece of opium. To him, as an Orientalist, I concluded that opium must be familiar; and the expression of his face convinced me that it was. Nevertheless, I was struck with some little consternation when I saw him suddenly raise his hand to his mouth and (in the schoolboy phrase) bolt the whole, divided into three pieces, at one mouthful. The quantity was enough to kill three dragoons and their horses; and I felt some alarm

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

for the poor creature; but what could be done? I had given him the opium in compassion for his solitary life, on recollecting that, if he had travelled on foot from London, it must be nearly three weeks since he could have exchanged a thought with any human being. I could not think of violating the laws of hospitality by having him seized and drenched with an emetic, and thus *frightening him into a notion that we were going to sacrifice him to some English idol*. No, there was clearly no help for it. He took his leave, and for some days I felt anxious, but, as I never heard of any Malay being found dead, I became convinced that he was used to opium, and that I must have done him the service I designed, by giving him one night of respite from the pains of wandering.

This incident I have mentioned, because this Malay (partly from the picturesque exhibition he assisted to frame, partly from the anxiety I connected with his image for some days) fastened afterwards upon my dreams, and brought other Malays with him worse than himself, that ran amuck at me, and led me into a world of troubles.

### THE DREAM

The Malay has been a fearful enemy for months. I have been every night, through his means, transported into Asiatic scenes. I know not whether others share in my feelings on this point, but I have often thought that if I were compelled to forgo England, and to live in China, and among Chinese manners and modes of life and scenery, I should go mad.

The causes of my horror lie deep, and some of them must be common to others. Southern Asia, in general, is the seat of awful images and associations. As the **cradle** of the human race, it would alone have a dim and reverential feeling connected with it. But there are other reasons. No man can pretend that the wild, barbarous, and capricious superstitions of Africa, or of savage tribes

## THE MALAY

elsewhere, affect him in the way that he is affected by the ancient, monumental, cruel, and elaborate religions of Indostan, etc. The mere antiquity of Asiatic things, of their institutions, histories, modes of faith, etc., is so impressive that to me the vast age of the race and name overpowers the sense of youth in the individual. A young Chinese seems to me an antediluvian man renewed. Even Englishmen, though not bred in any knowledge of such institutions, cannot but shudder at the mystic sublimity of *castes* that have flowed apart, and refused to mix, through such immemorial tracts of time, nor can any man fail to be awed by the names of the Ganges or the Euphrates. It contributes much to these feelings that Southern Asia is, and has been for thousands of years, the part of the earth most swarming with human life—the great *officina gentium*. Man is a weed in those regions. The vast empires, also, in which the enormous population of Asia has always been cast, give a further sublimity to the feelings associated with all Oriental names and images. In China, over and above what it has in common with the rest of Southern Asia, I am terrified by the modes of life, by the manners, and the barrier of utter abhorrence and want of sympathy placed between us by feelings deeper than I can analyse. I could sooner live with lunatics, or brute animals.

All this, and much more than I can say, the reader must enter into before he can comprehend the unimaginable horror which these dreams of Oriental imagery and mythological tortures impressed upon me. Under the connecting feeling of tropical heat and vertical sunlights, I brought together all creatures, birds, beasts, reptiles, all trees and plants, usages and appearances, that are found in all tropical regions, and assembled them together in China or Indostan. From kindred feelings, I soon brought Egypt, and all her gods, under the same law. I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by parroquets, by cockatoos. I ran into pagodas—and was fixed, for centuries, at the summit, or in secret rooms: I

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

was the idol; I was the priest; I was worshipped; I was sacrificed. I fled from the wrath of Brahma through all the forests of Asia: Vishnu hated me. Seeva laid wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris: I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. I was buried, for a thousand years, in stone coffins, with mummies and sphynxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids. I was kissed, with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles, and laid, confounded with all unutterable slimy things, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud.

I thus give the reader some slight abstraction of my Oriental dreams, which always filled me with such amazement at the monstrous scenery, that horror seemed absorbed, for a while, in sheer astonishment. Sooner or later came a reflux of feeling that swallowed up the astonishment, and left me, not so much in terror, as in hatred and abomination of what I saw. Over every form, and threat, and punishment, and dim sightless incarnation, brooded a sense of eternity and infinity that drove me into an oppression as of madness. Into these dreams only, it was, with one or two slight exceptions, that any circumstances of physical horror entered. All before had been moral and spiritual terrors. But here the main agents were ugly birds, or snakes, or crocodiles—especially the last

The cursed crocodile became to me the object of more horror than almost all the rest. I was compelled to live with him; and (as was always the case almost in my dreams) for centuries. I escaped sometimes, and found myself in Chinese houses, with cane tables, etc. All the feet of the tables, sofas, etc., soon became instinct with life: the abominable head of the crocodile, and his leering eyes, looked out at me, multiplied into a thousand repetitions; and I stood loathing and fascinated.

And so often did this hideous reptile haunt my dreams, that many times the very same dream was broken up in the very same way: I heard gentle voices speaking to me

## THE MALAY

(I hear everything when I am sleeping); and instantly I awoke: it was broad noon; and my children were standing, hand in hand, at my bedside; come to show me their coloured shoes, or new frocks, or to let me see them dressed for going out. I protest that so awful was the transition from the odious crocodile, and the other unutterable monsters and abortions of my dreams, to the sight of innocent *human* natures and of infancy, that, in the mighty and sudden revulsion of mind, I wept, and could not forbear it, as I kissed their faces

### EXERCISES

1 *Vocabulary* Here are some of the words used by De Quincey in his marvellous description of his vision of the East. Observe how full they are both of sound and meaning. Use the words in sentences of your own.

Asiatic, awful, reverential, barbarous, capricious, superstitious, monumental, cruel, elaborate, Indostan, antediluvian, mystic, sublimity, castes, immemorial, Ganges, Euphrates, Oriental, abhorrence, sympathy; unimaginable, imagery, mythological, tortures, tropical, vertical, monkeys, paroquets, cockatoos, pagodas, Brahma, Vishnu, Seeva, Isis, Osiris, mummies; sphynxes, pyramids, Nilotic, crocodiles, monstrous, abomination, eternity, infinity, physical, spiritual, repetition, loathing, fascinated

2 *Grammar* Some of the long and complicated sentences to be analysed

- (a) I did not immediately (P 50)
- (b) Half-hidden by (P 51)
- (c) I had given him the opium (P 52)
- (d) I know not whether others (P 52)
- (e) All this, and much more (P 53)

3 *Précis* As well as you can, summarize De Quincey's dream in three short paragraphs

4 *Interpretation* Take the paragraph beginning, "The servant who opened the door" (P 50)

(a) Summarize the passage in your own words, trying to retain the striking pictorial effect

(b) Give a title to the paragraph.

(c) Make lists of words which suggest respectively (i) colour, (ii) attitude, and (iii) the East

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

(d) Add a note on the style, paying attention to the wealth of the vocabulary and the length of the sentences

5 *Composition* Write an essay on

(a) 'A Dream

(b) The Crocodile

(c) A Visit to the Pyramids, or to an Eastern Temple

## OLIVER GOLDSMITH

### *The Vicar of Wakefield*

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-74) was an Irishman who turned his hand to many kinds of literature, and he did well in most of them. His poems, *The Traveller* (1764) and *The Deserted Village* (1770), are well known, as is his comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773).

We give a passage from his novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1762), probably the best of all our earlier novels. The story is based upon Goldsmith's recollections of his own boyhood. The sweet and kindly character of the old Vicar, who actually tells the story, is based upon that of Goldsmith's father, perhaps the sketch of Moses, the clumsy and self-satisfied son, is a sly satire upon himself. The story that runs through the book is no more than that of the fortunes and misfortunes of the good Vicar's family. They have their periods of acute depression, but all comes well in the end. The tale is saved from being merely commonplace by the ease and humour with which Goldsmith handles the various episodes.



## MOSES AT THE FAIR

**M**Y wife's scheme was nothing less than that, as we were now to hold up our heads a little higher in the world, it would be proper to sell the colt, which was grown old, at a neighbouring fair, and buy us a horse that would carry single or double upon an occasion, and make a pretty appearance at church or upon a visit. This at first I opposed stoutly, but it was as stoutly defended by my wife and daughters. However, as I weakened, my antagonists gained strength, till at last it was resolved to part with him.

As the fair happened on the following day, I had intentions of going myself, but my wife persuaded me that I had got a cold, and nothing could prevail upon her to permit me from home. "No, my dear," cried she, "our son Moses is a discreet boy, and can buy and sell to very good advantage, you know all our great bargains are of his purchasing. He always stands out and higgles, and actually tires them till he gets a bargain."

As I had some opinion of my son's prudence, I was willing enough to intrust him with this commission, and the next morning I perceived his sisters mighty busy in fitting out Moses for the fair, trimming his hair, brushing his buckles, and cocking his hat with pins. The business of the toilet being over, we had at last the satisfaction of seeing him mounted upon the colt, with a deal-box before him to bring home groceries in. He had on a coat made of that cloth called thunder-and-lightning, which, though grown too short, was much too good to be thrown away. His waistcoat was of gosling green, and his sisters had tied his hair with a broad black riband. We all

## MOSES AT THE FAIR

followed him several paces from the door, bawling after him " Good luck ! good luck ! " till we could see him no longer.

Towards nightfall I began to wonder what could keep our son so long at the fair " Never mind our son," cried my wife ; " depend upon it, he knows what he is about I'll warrant we'll never see him sell his hen on a rainy day. I have seen him buy such bargains as would amaze one. I'll tell you a good story about that, that will make you split your sides with laughing But, as I live ! yonder comes Moses, without a horse, and the box at his back "

As she spoke, Moses came slowly on foot, and sweating under the deal-box, which he had strapped round his shoulders like a pedlar " Welcome ! welcome, Moses ! well, my boy, what have you brought us from the fair ? "

" I have brought you myself," cried Moses, with a sly look, and resting the box on the dresser.

" Ay, Moses," cried my wife, " that we know, but where is the horse ? "

" I have sold him," cried Moses, " for three pounds five shillings and twopence "

" Well done, my good boy," returned she, " I knew you would touch them off Between ourselves, three pounds five shillings and twopence is no bad day's work. Come, let us have it then."

" I have brought back no money," cried Moses again, " I have laid it all out in a bargain, and here it is," pulling out a bundle from his breast, " here they are, a gross of green spectacles with silver rims and shagreen cases."

" A gross of green spectacles ! " repeated my wife, in a faint voice. " And you have parted with the colt, and brought us back nothing but a gross of green paltry spectacles ! "

" Dear mother," cried the boy, " why won't you listen to reason ? I had them a dead bargain, or I should not

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

have bought them. The silver rims alone will sell for double the money "

" A fig for the silver rims ! " cried my wife in a passion ;  
" I dare swear they won't sell for above half the money  
at the rate of broken silver, five shillings an ounce "

" You need be under no uneasiness," cried I, " about  
selling the rims, for they are not worth sixpence, for I  
perceive they are only copper varnished over."

" What ! " cried my wife, " not silver? the rims not  
silver? "

" No," cried I, " no more silver than your saucepan "

" And so," returned she, " we have parted with the  
colt, and have only got a gross of green spectacles with  
copper rims and shagreen cases! A murrain take such  
trumpery! The blockhead has been imposed on, and  
should have known his company better "

" There, my dear," cried I, " you are wrong; he should  
not have known them at all "

" Marry, hang the idiot ! " returned she, " to bring me  
such stuff. if I had them I would throw them in the  
fire "

" There again you are wrong, my dear," cried I, " for  
though they be copper, we will keep them by us, as  
copper spectacles, you know, are better than nothing "

By this time the unfortunate Moses was undeceived  
He now saw that he had indeed been imposed upon by a  
prowling sharper, who, observing his figure, had marked  
him for an easy prey I therefore asked him the circum-  
stances of his deception He sold the horse, it seems, and  
walked the fair in search of another. A reverend-looking  
man brought him to a tent, under pretence of having one  
to sell. " Here," continued Moses, " we met another man,  
very well dressed, who desired to borrow twenty pounds  
upon these, saying that he wanted money, and would dis-  
pose of them for a third of their value The first gentle-  
man, who pretended to be my friend, whispered me to  
buy them, and cautioned me not to let so good an offer  
pass. I sent for Mr Flamborough, and they talked him up

## MOSES AT THE FAIR

as finely as they did me , and so at last we were persuaded to buy the two gross between us ”

It was found that our remaining horse was utterly useless for the plough without his companion, and equally unfit for the road, as wanting an eye it was therefore determined that we should dispose of him , and, to prevent imposition, that I should go with him myself to the fair. Though this was one of the first mercantile transactions of my life, yet I had no doubt of acquitting myself with reputation. My wife, however, next morning at parting, after I had got some paces from the door, called me back, to advise me, in a whisper, to have all my eyes about me.

I had, in the usual forms, when I came to the fair, put my horse through all his paces, but for some time had no bidders. At last a chapman approached, and after he had for a good while examined the horse round, finding him blind of one eye, he would have nothing to say to him , a second came up, but observing he had a spavin, declared he would not have him for the driving home, a third perceived he had a windgall, and would bid no money , a fourth wondered what the plague I could do at the fair with a blind, spavined, galled hack that was only fit for the dogs. By this time I began to have a most hearty contempt for the poor animal myself, and was almost ashamed at the approach of every customer , for, though I did not entirely believe all the fellows told me, yet I reflected that the number of witnesses was a strong presumption that they were right.

I was in this mortifying situation when a brother clergyman, an old acquaintance, who had also business at the fair, came up, and shaking me by the hand, proposed adjourning to a public-house, and taking a glass of whatever we could get. I readily closed with the offer, and entering an ale-house, we were shown into a little back room, where there was only a venerable old man, who sat wholly intent over a very large book which he was reading. I never in my life saw a figure that prepossessed me

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

more favourably. His locks of silver grey venerably shaded his temples, and his green old age seemed to be the result of health and benevolence. However, his presence did not interrupt our conversation : my friend and I discoursed on the various turns of fortune we had met, the Whistonian controversy, my last pamphlet, the archdeacon's reply, and the hard measure that was dealt me. But our attention was in a short time taken off by the appearance of a youth, who, entering the room, respectfully said something softly to the old stranger. " Make no apologies, my child," said the old man, " to do good is a duty we owe to all our fellow-creatures. Take this—I wish it were more; but five pounds will relieve your distress, and you are welcome." The modest youth shed tears of gratitude, and yet his gratitude was scarcely equal to mine. I could have hugged the good old man in my arms, his benevolence pleased me so. He continued to read, and we resumed our conversation, until my companion, after some time, recollecting that he had business to transact in the fair, promised to be soon back, adding that he always desired to have as much of Dr Primrose's company as possible. The old gentleman, hearing my name mentioned, seemed to look at me with attention for some time, and, when my friend was gone, most respectfully demanded if I was anyway related to the great Primrose, that courageous monogamist, who had been the bulwark of the Church. Never did my heart feel sincerer rapture than at that moment. " Sir," cried I, " the applause of so good a man, as I am sure you are, adds to that happiness in my breast which your benevolence has already excited. You behold before you, sir, that Dr Primrose, the monogamist, whom you have been pleased to call great. You here see that unfortunate divine, who has so long, and it would ill become me to say successfully, fought against the deuterogamy of the age."

" Sir," cried the stranger, struck with awe, " I fear I have been too familiar; but you'll forgive my curiosity, sir. I beg pardon."

## MOSES AT THE FAIR

"Sir," cried I, grasping his hand, "you are so far from displeasing me by your familiarity that I must beg you'll accept my friendship, as you already have my esteem."

"Then with gratitude I accept the offer," cried he, squeezing me by the hand, "thou glorious pillar of unshaken orthodoxy and do I behold——"

I here interrupted what he was going to say; for though, as an author, I could digest no small share of flattery, yet now my modesty would permit no more. However, no lovers in romance ever cemented a more instantaneous friendship. We talked on various subjects.

The subject insensibly changed from the business of antiquity to that which brought us both to the fair. Mine, I told him, was to sell a horse, and, very luckily indeed, his was to buy one for one of his tenants. My horse was soon produced, and, in fine, we struck a bargain. Nothing now remained but to pay me, and he accordingly pulled out a thirty-pound note, and bade me change it. *Not being in a capacity of complying with his demand*, he ordered his footman to be called up, who made his appearance in a very genteel livery. "Here, Abraham," cried he, "go and get gold for this, you'll do it at neighbour Jackson's, or anywhere."

While the fellow was gone, he entertained me with a pathetic harangue on the great scarcity of silver, which I undertook to improve by deploring also the great scarcity of gold, so that, by the time Abraham had returned, we had both agreed that money was never so hard to be come at as now. Abraham returned to inform us that he had been over the whole fair, and could not get change, though he had offered half-a-crown for doing it. This was a very great disappointment to us all, but the old gentleman, having paused a little, asked me if I knew one Solomon Flamborough in my part of the country: upon replying that he was my next-door neighbour, "If that be the case, then," returned he, "I believe we shall deal. You shall have a draft upon him, payable at sight; and,

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

let me tell you, he is as warm a man as any within five miles round him. Honest Solomon and I have been acquainted for many years together I remember I always beat him at three jumps, but he could hop upon one leg farther than I."

A draft upon my neighbour was to me the same as money, for I was sufficiently convinced of his ability. The draft was signed, and put into my hands, and Mr Jenkinson, the old gentleman, his man Abraham, and my horse Old Blackberry, trotted off very well pleased with each other

After a short interval, being left to reflection, I began to recollect that I had done wrong in taking a draft from a stranger, and so prudently resolved upon following the purchaser, and having back my horse But this was now too late I therefore made directly homewards, resolving to get the draft changed into money at my friend's as fast as possible I found my honest neighbour smoking his pipe at his own door, and informing him that I had a small bill upon him, he read it twice over "You can read the name, I suppose," cried I, "Ephraim Jenkinson."

"Yes," returned he, "the name is written plain enough, and I know the gentleman too, the greatest rascal under the canopy of heaven This is the very same rogue who sold us the spectacles Was he not a venerable-looking man, with grey hair, and no flaps to his pocket-holes? and did he not talk a long string of learning about Greek, cosmogony, and the world?"

To this I replied with a groan

"Ay," continued he, "he has but that one piece of learning in the world, and he always talks it away whenever he finds a scholar in company. but I know the rogue, and will catch him yet."

## MOSES AT THE FAIR

### EXERCISES

1 *Archaisms* Goldsmith's prose, though still clear and readable, shows nevertheless some slight traces of old-fashioned diction. These are called *archaisms*. In the first page, for example, we have the expression *carry single or double* and the word *higgles*. Make a list of more archaisms, and give their meanings.

#### 2 *Grammar*

(a) Sentences to be analysed

- (i) As the fair happened (P 58)
- (ii) By this time I began (P 61)
- (iii) The old gentleman, hearing (P 62)
- (iv) Abraham returned to inform us (P 63)

(b) Make adjectives from the following nouns  
world, strength, cold, boy, advantage, prudence, business, silver, uneasiness, idiot, fire, circumstance, deception, man, pretence, reputation, form, contempt, acquaintance, benevolence

(c) Make nouns from the following adjectives  
high, old, neighbouring, single, double, pretty, discreet; good, great, busy, short, broad, black, rainy, sly, green, easy, unfit, mercantile, mortifying

3 *Meanings* Give words meaning the *opposite* of the following

nothing, pretty, stoutly, antagonists, strength, resolved, persuade, permit, discreet, advantage, prudence, busy, satisfaction, broad, slowly, paltry, uneasiness, unfortunate, easy, favourably

4 *Direct and Indirect Speech* Read over again the paragraph beginning, "The subject insensibly changed," and turn the direct speech into indirect, and the indirect into direct

5. *Interpretation* From your reading of the extract, write a paragraph each on (a) the Vicar, (b) his wife, (c) Moses, and (d) Ephraim Jenkinson

#### 6. *Composition*

(a) Describe the life and adventures of Ephraim Jenkinson, the 'confidence man'

(b) Write an essay on "A Visit to a Country Fair."

(c) Write the autobiography of a farmer's horse



## CHARLES DICKENS

### *Oliver Twist*

CHARLES DICKENS (1812-70) was born near Portsmouth, but by the time he was eleven his family had settled in London. His early years saw much poverty, and the experiences of those years are often reflected in his writings. He was never tired of speaking and writing on behalf of the poor and downtrodden.

His first real book, *Pickwick Papers* (1837), was his first great success. Even while *Pickwick Papers* was being finished, he was writing *Oliver Twist* (1837), which in its own way was as striking a success as its predecessor. Other famous novels of Dickens are *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840) and *David Copperfield* (1849).

*Oliver Twist* is a long and rambling story of the life of a poor workhouse-boy. Goaded by the inhumanity of the workhouse-officials, he runs away and falls into the hands of Fagin, a rascally old Jew, the trainer of thieves. Bill Sikes, a picturesque burglar, is attached to Fagin's gang. In the end Oliver turns out to be somebody important, and virtue has its reward. The actual story is unimportant; what matters is the way in which Dickens describes the characters in the story, and the way in which he exposes the evils of the old workhouse-system.

Our extract is the best-known passage in the book, where Oliver "asks for more." From his infancy he had boarded out at Mrs Mann's establishment, but now the time has come for him to return to the workhouse, his birthplace.

## ASKING FOR MORE

OLIVER TWIST'S ninth birthday found him a pale, thin child, somewhat diminutive in stature, and decidedly small in circumference. But nature or inheritance had implanted a good sturdy spirit in Oliver's breast. It had had plenty of room to expand, thanks to the spare diet of the establishment, and perhaps to this circumstance may be attributed his having any ninth birthday at all. Be this as it may however, it *was* his ninth birthday; and he was keeping it in the coal-cellar with a select party of two other young gentlemen, who, after participating with him in a sound thrashing, had been locked up for atrociously presuming to be hungry, when Mrs Mann, the good lady of the house, was unexpectedly startled by the apparition of Mr Bumble, the beadle, striving to undo the wicket of the garden-gate.

"Goodness gracious! Is that you, Mr Bumble, sir?" said Mrs Mann, thrusting her head out of the window in well-affected ecstasies of joy. "(Susan, take Oliver and them two brats upstairs, and wash 'em directly.) My heart alive! Mr Bumble, how glad I am to see you, sure-ly!"

Now, Mr Bumble was a fat man, and a choleric; so, instead of responding to this open-hearted salutation in a kindred spirit, he gave the little wicket a tremendous shake, and then bestowed upon it a kick which could have emanated from no leg but a beadle's.

"Lor', only think," said Mrs Mann, running out, for the three boys had been removed by this time, "only think of that! That I should have forgotten that the gate was bolted on the inside, on account of them dear

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children! Walk in, sir; walk in, pray, Mr Bumble, do, sir."

Mrs Mann ushered the beadle into a small parlour with a brick floor, placed a seat for him; and officiously deposited his cocked-hat and cane on the table before him. Mr Bumble wiped from his forehead the perspiration which his walk had engendered, glanced complacently at the cocked-hat, and smiled. Yes, he smiled. Beadles are but men and Mr Bumble smiled.

"Now about business," said the beadle, taking out a leathern pocket-book. "The child that was half-baptized Oliver Twist, is nine year old to-day."

"Bless him!" interposed Mrs Mann, inflaming her left eye with the corner of her apron.

"And notwithstanding a offered reward of ten pound, which was afterwards increased to twenty pound, notwithstanding the most superlative, and, I may say, supernatural exertions on the part of this parish," said Bumble, "we have never been able to discover his father, or what was his mother's name."

Mrs Mann raised her hands in astonishment, but added, after a moment's reflection, "How comes he to have any name at all, then?"

The beadle drew himself up with great pride, and said, "I inwented it."

"You, Mr Bumble!"

"I, Mrs Mann. We name our fondlings in alphabetical order. The last was a S—Swubble, I named him. This was a T—Twist, I named *him*. The next one as comes will be Unwin, and the next Vilkins. I have got names ready made to the end of the alphabet, and all the way through it again, when we come to Z."

"Why, you're quite a literary character, sir!" said Mrs Mann.

"Well, well," said the beadle, evidently gratified with the compliment, "perhaps I may be. Perhaps I may be, Mrs Mann. Oliver being now too old to remain here, the board have determined to have him back into

## ASKING FOR MORE

the house. I have come out myself to take him there. So let me see him at once."

"I'll fetch him directly," said Mrs Mann, leaving the room for that purpose. Oliver, having had by this time as much of the outer coat of dirt which encrusted his face and hands, removed, as could be scrubbed off in one washing, was led into the room by his benevolent protectress

"Make a bow to the gentleman, Oliver," said Mrs Mann

Oliver made a bow, which was divided between the beadle on the chair and the cocked-hat on the table

"Will you go along with me, Oliver?" said Mr Bumble, in a majestic voice

Oliver was about to say that he would go along with anybody with great readiness, when, glancing upward, he caught sight of Mrs Mann, who had got behind the beadle's chair, and was shaking her fist at him with a furious countenance. He took the hint at once, for the fist had been too often impressed upon his body not to be deeply impressed upon his recollection

"Will *she* go with me?" inquired poor Oliver.

"No, she can't," replied Mr Bumble "But she'll come and see you sometimes"

This was no very great consolation to the child. Young as he was, however, he had sense enough to make a feint of feeling great regret at going away. It was no very difficult matter for the boy to call tears into his eyes. Hunger and recent ill-usage are great assistants if you want to cry, and Oliver cried very naturally indeed. Mrs Mann gave him a thousand embraces, and, what Oliver wanted a great deal more, a piece of bread and butter, lest he should seem too hungry when he got to the workhouse. With the slice of bread in his hand, and the little brown-cloth parish cap on his head, Oliver was then led away by Mr Bumble from the wretched home where one kind word or look had never lighted the gloom of his infant years.

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

Mr Bumble walked on with long strides; little Oliver, firmly grasping his gold-laced cuff, trotted beside him, inquiring at the end of every quarter of a mile whether they were "nearly there." To these interrogations Mr Bumble returned very brief and snappish replies.

Oliver had not been within the walls of the work-house a quarter of an hour, and had scarcely completed the demolition of a second slice of bread, when Mr Bumble, who had handed him over to the care of an old woman, returned, and, telling him it was a board night, informed him that the board had said he was to appear before it forthwith.

Not having a very clearly defined notion of what a live board was, Oliver was rather astounded by this intelligence, and was not quite certain whether he ought to laugh or cry. He had no time to think about the matter, however; for Mr Bumble gave him a tap on the head, with his cane, to wake him up, and another on the back to make him lively, and bidding him follow, conducted him into a large whitewashed room, where eight or ten fat gentlemen were sitting round a table. At the top of the table, seated in an armchair rather higher than the rest, was a particularly fat gentleman with a very round red face.

"Bow to the board," said Bumble. Oliver brushed away two or three tears that were lingering in his eyes; and seeing no board but the table, fortunately bowed to that.

"What's your name, boy?" said the gentleman in the high chair.

Oliver was frightened at the sight of so many gentlemen, which made him tremble, and the beadle gave him another tap behind, which made him cry. These two causes made him answer in a very low and hesitating voice; whereupon a gentleman in a white waistcoat said he was a fool. Which was a capital way of raising his spirits, and putting him quite at his ease.

"Boy," said the gentleman in the high chair, "listen to me. You know you're an orphan, I suppose?"

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"What's that, sir?" inquired poor Oliver.

"The boy *is* a fool—I thought he was," said the gentleman in the white waistcoat.

"Hush!" said the gentleman who had spoken first  
"You know you've got no father or mother, and that you were brought up by the parish, don't you?"

"Yes, sir," replied Oliver, weeping bitterly

"What are you crying for?" inquired the gentleman in the white waistcoat. And to be sure it was very extraordinary. What *could* the boy be crying for?

"Well! You have come here to be educated, and taught a useful trade," said the red-faced gentleman in the high chair

"So you'll begin to pick oakum to-morrow morning at six o'clock," added the surly one in the white waistcoat.

For the combination of both these blessings in the one simple process of picking oakum, Oliver bowed low by the direction of the beadle, and was then hurried away to a large ward where, on a rough, hard bed, he sobbed himself to sleep.

Poor Oliver! He little thought, as he lay sleeping in happy unconsciousness of all around him, that the board had that very day arrived at a decision which would exercise the most material influence over all his future fortunes. But they had. And this was it.

The members of this board were very sage, deep, philosophical men, and when they came to turn their attention to the workhouse, they found out at once, what ordinary folks would never have discovered—the poor people liked it! It was a regular place of public entertainment for the poorer classes; a tavern where there was nothing to pay; a public breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper all the year round; a brick and mortar elysium, where it was all play and no work. "Oho!" said the board, looking very knowing; "we are the fellows to set this to rights; we'll stop it all, in no time." So, they established the rule, that all poor people should have the alternative (for

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

they would compel nobody, not they) of being starved by a gradual process in the house, or by a quick one out of it. With this view, they contracted with the water-works to lay on an unlimited supply of water; and with a corn-factor to supply periodically small quantities of oatmeal, and issued three meals of thin gruel a day, with an onion twice a week, and half a roll on Sundays.

The room in which the boys were fed was a large stone hall, with a copper at one end out of which the master, dressed in an apron for the purpose, and assisted by one or two women, ladled the gruel at mealtimes. Of this festive composition each boy had one porringer, and no more—except on occasions of great public rejoicing, when he had two ounces and a quarter of bread besides. The bowls never wanted washing. The boys polished them with their spoons till they shone again; and when they had performed this operation (which never took very long, the spoons being nearly as large as the bowls), they would sit staring at the copper, with such eager eyes, as if they could have devoured the very bricks of which it was composed; employing themselves, meanwhile, in sucking their fingers most assiduously, with the view of catching up any stray splashes of gruel that might have been cast thereon. Boys have generally excellent appetites. Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months at last they got so voracious and wild with hunger, that one boy, who was tall for his age, and hadn't been used to that sort of thing (for his father had kept a small cook-shop), hinted darkly to his companions, that unless he had another basin of gruel *per diem*, he was afraid he might some night happen to eat the boy who slept next him, who happened to be a weakly youth of tender age. He had a wild, hungry eye; and they implicitly believed him. A council was held; lots were cast who should walk up to the master after supper that evening, and ask for more; and it fell to Oliver Twist.

The evening arrived, the boys took their places. The

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master, in his cook's uniform, stationed himself at the copper; his pauper assistants ranged themselves behind him; the gruel was served out; and a long grace was said over the short commons. The gruel disappeared; the boys whispered to each other, and winked at Oliver; while his next neighbours nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery. He rose from the table, and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said, somewhat alarmed at his own temerity:

"Please, sir, I want some more."

The master was a fat, healthy man, but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralysed with wonder, the boys with fear.

"What!" said the master at length, in a faint voice.

"Please, sir," replied Oliver, "I want some more."

The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with the ladle, pinioned him in his arms, and shrieked aloud for the beadle.

The board were sitting in solemn conclave, when Mr Bumble rushed into the room in great excitement, and addressing the gentleman in the high chair, said:

"Mr Limbkins, I beg your pardon, sir! Oliver Twist has asked for more!"

There was a general start. Horror was depicted on every countenance.

"For *more*!" said Mr Limbkins. "Compose yourself, Bumble, and answer me distinctly. Do I understand that he asked for more, after he had eaten the supper allotted by the dietary?"

"He did, sir," replied Bumble.

"That boy will be hung," said the gentleman in the white waistcoat. "I know that boy will be hung."

Nobody controverted the prophetic gentleman's opinion. An animated discussion took place. Oliver was ordered into instant confinement; and a bill was next morning



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pasted on the outside of the gate, offering a reward of five pounds to anybody who would take Oliver Twist off the hands of the parish. In other words, five pounds and Oliver Twist were offered to any man or woman who wanted an apprentice to any trade, business, or calling.

### EXERCISES

1 *Irony* Irony consists of saying one thing and meaning exactly the opposite. It is a deadly form of criticism, and in *Oliver Twist*, as can be seen in our passage, Dickens makes free use of it. For example, observe the way in which he describes Mrs Mann as Oliver's "benevolent protectress." In reality she was an odious old tyrant.

Give other examples of Dickens's irony in the passage, and show what Dickens really meant.

2 *Précis* Describe in three short paragraphs the experiences of Oliver Twist in the workhouse.

3 *Interpretation* Write a paragraph each on Mrs Mann and Mr Bumble, describing their characters.

## EDWARD GIBBON

### *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

EDWARD GIBBON (1737-94) takes his place in the history of literature as the author of one book, and one book only; but that is a very important book—*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the six volumes of which appeared between the years 1776 and 1788.

This monumental work, which occupied nearly all the active years of Gibbon's lifetime, begins with the Christian era and ends with the fall of Constantinople in 1453. In the course of his narrative the historian sketches the downfall and destruction of the Roman Empire at the hands of the barbarian invaders. With this work of destruction, however, goes on the more mighty work of construction; and with a masterly hand Gibbon outlines the emergence and growth of the European nations, founded upon the wreckage of the mighty Empire. Along with such great events goes the rise of the modern religions, such as Christianity and Mohammedanism, which brought manifold complications into the political scene. Gibbon covers the whole vast field of his history with such accuracy, fullness, and ease that he must be considered as one of the masters of the historical method.

His style of writing, moreover, is suited to the theme. It is dignified and stately, but moves with ease and precision. As well as being a master of history, Gibbon is a master of English prose-style.

The theme of the selected passage is the fall of Constantinople, the culminating point of the work. The great city, the capital of the eastern Roman Empire, founded by the Emperor Constantine in 330, had for centuries resisted the attacks of the Turks from without and the dissensions of the Christians within. At last, under Mohammed II, the Turks overcame the city.

At the time John Palæologus II was the Emperor of the Eastern Empire; John Justiniani was the chief of the Christian defenders.

## THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

THE immediate loss of Constantinople may be ascribed to the bullet, or arrow, which pierced the gauntlet of John Justiniani. The sight of his blood, and the exquisite pain, appalled the courage of the chief, whose arms and counsels were the firmest rampart of the city. As he withdrew from his station in quest of a surgeon, his flight was perceived and stopped by the indefatigable emperor. "Your wound," exclaimed Palæologus, "is slight, the danger is pressing, your presence is necessary; and whither will you retire?"—"I will retire," said the trembling Genoese, "by the same road which God has opened to the Turks", and at these words he hastily passed through one of the breaches of the inner wall. By this pusillanimous act he stained the honours of a military life, and the few days which he survived in Galata, or the isle of Chios, were embittered by his own and the public reproach. His example was imitated by the greatest part of the Latin auxiliaries, and the defence began to slacken when the attack was pressed with redoubled vigour. The number of the Ottomans was fifty, perhaps a hundred, times superior to that of the Christians; the double walls were reduced by the cannon to a heap of ruins. In a circuit of several miles some places must be found more easy of access, or more feebly guarded; and if the besiegers could penetrate in a single point, the whole city was irrecoverably lost. The first who deserved the Sultan's reward was Hassan the Janizary, of gigantic stature and strength. With his scimitar in one hand and his buckler in the other, he ascended the outward fortification: of the thirty Janizaries who

## THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

were emulous of his valour, eighteen perished in the bold adventure. Hassan and his twelve companions had reached the summit: the giant was precipitated from the rampart he rose on one knee, and was again oppressed by a shower of darts and stones. But his success had proved that the achievement was possible. the walls and towers were instantly covered with a swarm of Turks, and the Greeks, now driven from the vantage-ground, were overwhelmed by increasing multitudes. Amidst these multitudes, the Emperor, who accomplished all the duties of a general and a soldier, was long seen and finally lost. The nobles, who fought round his person, sustained, till their last breath, the honourable names of Palæologus and Cantacuzene. his mournful exclamation was heard, "Can not there be found a Christian to cut off my head?" and his last fear was that of falling alive into the hands of the infidels. The prudent despair of Constantine cast away the purple. amidst the tumult he fell by an unknown hand, and his body was buried under a mountain of the slain. After his death resistance and order were no more. the Greeks fled towards the city, and many were pressed and stifled in the narrow pass of the gate of St Romanus. The victorious Turks rushed through the breaches of the inner wall, and as they advanced into the streets, they were soon joined by their brethren, who had forced the gate Phenar on the side of the harbour. In the first heat of the pursuit about two thousand Christians were put to the sword, but avarice soon prevailed over cruelty, and the victors acknowledged that they should immediately have given quarter, if the valour of the Emperor and his chosen bands had not prepared them for a similar opposition in every part of the capital. It was thus, after a siege of fifty-three days, that Constantinople, which had defied the power of Chosroes, the Chagan, and the caliphs, was irretrievably subdued by the arms of Mohammed the Second. Her empire only had been subverted by the Latins. her religion was trampled in the dust by the Moslem conquerors.

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The tidings of misfortune fly with a rapid wing; yet such was the extent of Constantinople, that the more distant quarters might prolong, some moments, the happy ignorance of their ruin. But in the general consternation, in the feelings of selfish or social anxiety, in the tumult and thunder of the assault, a *sleepless* night and morning must have elapsed. On the assurance of the public calamity, the houses and convents were instantly deserted; and the trembling inhabitants flocked together in the streets, like a herd of timid animals, as if accumulated weakness could be productive of strength, or in the vain hope that amid the crowd each individual might be safe and invisible. From every part of the capital they flowed into the church of St Sophia. in the space of an hour, the sanctuary, the choir, the nave, the upper and lower galleries, were filled with the multitudes of fathers and husbands, of women and children, of priests, monks, and religious virgins. the doors were barred on the inside, and they sought protection from the sacred dome which they had so lately abhorred as a profane and polluted edifice. Their confidence was founded on the prophecy of an enthusiast or impostor, that one day the Turks would enter Constantinople, and pursue the Romans as far as the column of Constantine in the square before St Sophia: but that this would be the term of their calamities; that an angel would descend from heaven with a sword in his hand, and would deliver the empire, with that celestial weapon, to a poor man seated at the foot of the column. "Take this sword," would he say, "and avenge the people of the Lord." At these animating words the Turks would instantly fly, and the victorious Romans would drive them from the West and from all Anatolia, as far as the frontiers of Persia. It is on this occasion that Ducas, with some fancy and much truth, upbraids the discord and obstinacy of the Greeks. "Had that angel appeared," exclaims the historian, "had he offered to exterminate your foes if you would consent to the union of the church, even then, in that fatal moment,

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you would have rejected your safety, or have deceived your God "

While they expected the descent of the tardy angel, the doors were broken with axes; and as the Turks encountered no resistance, their bloodless hands were employed in selecting and securing the multitude of their prisoners. Youth, beauty, and the appearance of wealth, attracted their choice, and the right of property was decided among themselves by a prior seizure, by personal strength, and by the authority of command. In the space of an hour the male captives were bound with cords, the females with their veils and girdles. The senators were linked with their slaves, the prelates with the porters of the church; and young men of a plebeian class with noble maids whose faces had been invisible to the sun and their nearest kindred. In this common captivity the ranks of society were confounded, the ties of nature were cut asunder, and the inexorable soldier was careless of the father's groans, the tears of the mother, and the lamentations of the children. Of these unfortunate Greeks, of these domestic animals, whole strings were rudely driven through the streets; and as the conquerors were eager to return for more prey, their trembling pace was quickened with menaces and blows. At the same hour a similar rapine was exercised in all the churches and monasteries, in all the palaces and habitations, of the capital, nor could any place, however sacred or sequestered, protect the persons or the property of the Greeks. Above sixty thousand of this devoted people were transported from the city to the camp and fleet; exchanged or sold according to the caprice or interest of their masters, and dispersed in remote servitude through the provinces of the Ottoman empire.

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### EXERCISES

1 *Vocabulary* The following list of words illustrates the copiousness of Gibbon's vocabulary. Use these words in sentences of your own composition.

exquisite, indefatigable, pusillanimous, auxiliaries, irrecoverably, scimitar, emulous, precipitated, avarice, irretrievably, consternation, accumulated, edifice, enthusiast, celestial, exterminate, plebeian, inexorable, menaces, rapine, sequestered, caprice, servitude

2 *Meanings* Gibbon is fond of abstract words, which can be rendered more simply. Here are some that can be simplified:

(a) By this pusillanimous act he stained the honours of a military life

(b) Thirty Janizaries were emulous of his valour

(c) Avarice soon prevailed over cruelty

(d) Constantinople was irretrievably subdued by the arms of Mohammed the Second

(e) The tidings of misfortune fly with a rapid wing

(f) As if accumulated weakness could be productive of strength

3 *Interpretation* Take the paragraph beginning, "The tidings of misfortune" (p. 78)

(a) Express in your own words, and much more briefly, the sense of the paragraph

(b) Give the paragraph a title

(c) What was the Church of St Sophia? What parts of the building are mentioned by Gibbon?

(d) What prophecy does Gibbon mention? Does he believe in it?

(e) Why does he call the inhabitants "Romans"?

4 *History* Write a short account of the results of the fall of Constantinople upon European history

5 *Composition*

(a) Give the story of a defender of the walls

(b) Describe any other great catastrophe in history, such as the destruction of the Armada, or Napoleon's retreat from Moscow

## CHARLES KINGSLEY

### *Westward Ho!*

CHARLES KINGSLEY (1819-75), a Devonshire man, was a clergyman who devoted much of his life-work to the service of the poor. His short poems are of high merit, and his delightful phantasy, *The Water Babies* (1863), is among the few real children's classics

We give an extract from *Westward Ho!* (1855), the best of his historical romances. The tale begins in North Devon, bringing in such picturesque places as Clovelly and Bideford. Thence it shifts to South America, and finally it returns to England in time for the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. The chief character is Amyas Leigh, who pursues the wicked villain Don Guzman, who, in his turn, has carried off the beautiful Rose Salterne. The given extract tells how Amyas's crew have had to abandon their ship, the *Rose*, and take to the South American jungle. Frank Cary is Amyas's chief lieutenant.



## THE ATTACK ON THE STOCKADE

ALL day long a careful watch was kept among the branches of the mighty ceiba-tree. And what a tree that was! The hugest English oak would have seemed a stunted bush beside it. Borne up on roots, or rather walls, of twisted board, some twelve feet high, between which the whole crew, their ammunitions, and provisions, were housed roomily, rose the enormous trunk full forty feet in girth, towering like some tall lighthouse, smooth for a hundred feet, then crowned with boughs, each of which was a stately tree, whose topmost twigs were full two hundred and fifty feet from the ground. And yet it was easy for the sailors to ascend, so many natural ropes had kind Nature lowered for their use, in the smooth lianas which hung to the very earth, often without a knot or leaf. Once in the tree, you were within a new world, suspended between heaven and earth, and as Cary said, no wonder if, like Jack when he climbed the magic bean-stalk, you had found a castle, a giant, and a few acres of well-stocked park, packed away somewhere amid that labyrinth of timber. Flower-gardens at least were there in plenty, for every limb was covered with pendent cactuses, gorgeous orchises, and wild pines; and while one-half the tree was clothed in rich foliage, the other half, utterly leafless, bore on every twig brilliant yellow flowers, around which humming-birds whirled all day long. Parrots peeped in and out of every cranny, while, within the airy woodland, brilliant lizards basked like living gems upon the bark, gaudy finches flitted and chirruped, butterflies of every size and colour hovered over the topmost twigs, innumerable insects hummed

## THE ATTACK ON THE STOCKADE

from morn till eve; and when the sun went down, tree-toads came out to snore and croak till dawn. There was more life round that one tree than in a whole square mile of English soil.

And Amyas, as he lounged among the branches, felt at moments as if he would be content to stay there for ever, and feed his eyes and ears with all its wonders—and then started sighing from his dream, as he recollected that a few days must bring the foe upon them, and force him to decide upon some scheme at which the bravest heart might falter without shame. So there he sat (for he often took the scout's place himself), looking out over the fantastic tropic forest at his feet, and the flat mangrove-swamps below, and the white sheet of foam-flecked blue, and yet no sail appeared, and the men, as their fear of fever subsided, began to ask when they would go down and refit the ship, and Amyas put them off as best he could, till one noon he saw, slipping along the shore from the westward, a large ship under easy sail, and recognized in her, or thought he did so, the ship which they had passed upon their way.

If it was she, she must have run past them to La Guayra in the night, and have now returned, perhaps, to search for them along the coast.

She crept along slowly. He was in hopes that she might pass the river's mouth, but no. She lay too close to the shore, and, after a while, Amyas saw two boats pull in from her, and vanish behind the mangroves.

Sliding down a liana, he told what he had seen. The men, tired of inactivity, received the news with a shout of joy, and set to work to make all ready for their guests. Four brass swivels, which they had brought up, were mounted, fixed in logs, so as to command the path; the musketeers and archers clustered round them with their tackle ready, and half a dozen good marksmen volunteered into the cotton-tree with their arquebuses, as a post whence "a man might have very pretty shooting." Prayers followed as a matter of course, and dinner as a

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

matter of course also ; but two weary hours passed before there was any sign of the Spaniards

Presently a wreath of white smoke curled up from the swamp, and then the report of a caliver. Then, amid the growls of the English, the Spanish flag ran up above the trees, and floated—horrible to behold—at the mast-head of the *Rose*. They were signalling the ship for more hands, and, in effect, a third boat soon pushed off and vanished into the forest

Another hour, during which the men had thoroughly lost their temper, but not their hearts, by waiting, and talked so loud, and strode up and down so wildly, that Amyas had to warn them that there was no need to betray themselves, that the Spaniards might not find them after all, that they might pass the stockade close without seeing it, that, unless they hit off the track at once, they would probably return to their ship for the present, and exacted a promise from them that they would be perfectly silent till he gave the word to fire

Which wise commands had scarcely passed his lips, when, in the path below, glanced the head-piece of a Spanish soldier, and then another and another.

"Fools!" whispered Amyas to Cary, "they are coming up in single file, rushing on their own death Lie close, men!"

The path was so narrow that two could seldom come up abreast, and so steep that the enemy had much ado to struggle and stumble upwards The men seemed half unwilling to proceed, and hung back more than once; but Amyas could hear an authoritative voice behind, and presently there emerged to the front, sword in hand, a figure at which Amyas and Cary both started.

"Is it he?"

"Surely I know those legs among a thousand, though they are in armour."

"It is my turn for him now, Cary, remember! Silence, silence, men!"

The Spaniards seemed to feel that they were leading a

## THE ATTACK ON THE STOCKADE

forlorn hope. Don Guzman (for there was little doubt that it was he) had much ado to get them on at all.

"The fellows have heard how gently we handled the Guayra squadron," whispers Cary, "and have no wish to become fellow-martyrs with the captain of the *Madre Dolorosa*."

At last the Spaniards get up the steep slope to within forty yards of the stockade, and pause, suspecting a trap, and puzzled by the complete silence Amyas leaps on the top of it, a white flag in his hand, but his heart beats so fiercely at the sight of that hated figure, that he can hardly get out the words

"Don Guzman, the quarrel is between you and me, not between your men and mine I would have sent in a challenge to you at La Guayra, but you were away; I challenge you now to single combat "

"Lutheran dog, I have a halter for you, but no sword! As you served us at Smerwick, we will serve you now. Pirate and ravisher! you and yours shall share Oxenham's fate, as you have copied his crimes, and learn what it is to set foot unbidden on the dominions of the King of Spain "

"The devil take you and the King of Spain together! " shouts Amyas, laughing loudly "This ground belongs to him no more than it does to me, but to the Queen Elizabeth, in whose name I have taken as lawful possession of it as you ever did of Caraccas Fire, men! and God defend the right! "

Both parties obeyed the order; Amyas dropped down behind the stockade in time to let a caliver bullet whistle over his head; and the Spaniards recoiled as the narrow face of the stockade burst into one blaze of musketry and swivels, raking their long array from front to rear.

The front ranks fell over each other in heaps; the rear ones turned and ran; overtaken, nevertheless, by the English bullets and arrows, which tumbled them headlong down the steep path.

"Out, men, and charge them. See! the Don is run-

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

ning like the rest!" And scrambling over the abattis, Amyas and about thirty followed them fast; for he had hope of learning from some prisoner his brother's fate.

Amyas was unjust in his last words. Don Guzman, as if by miracle, had been only slightly wounded, and seeing his men run, had rushed back and tried to rally them, but was borne away by the fugitives.

However, the Spaniards were out of sight among the thick bushes before the English could overtake them, and Amyas, afraid lest they should rally and surround his small party, withdrew sorely against his will, and found in the pathway fourteen Spaniards, but all dead. For one of the wounded, with more courage than wisdom, had fired on the English, as he lay, and Amyas's men, whose blood was maddened both by their desperate situation and the frightful stories of the rescued galley-slaves, had killed them all before their captain could stop them.

"Are you mad?" cried Amyas, as he strikes up one fellow's sword. "Will you kill an Indian?"

And he drags out of the bushes an Indian lad of sixteen, who, slightly wounded, is crawling away like a copper snake along the ground.

"The black vermin has sent an arrow through my leg, and poisoned too, most like."

"God grant not. but an Indian is worth his weight in gold to us now," said Amyas, tucking his prize under his arm like a bundle. The lad, as soon as he saw there was no escape, resigned himself to his fate with true Indian stoicism, was brought in, and treated kindly enough, but refused to eat. For which, after much questioning, he gave as a reason, that he would make them kill him at once; for fat him they should not, and gradually gave them to understand that the English always (so at least the Spaniards said) fatted and ate their prisoners like the Caribs; and till he saw them go out and bury the bodies of the Spaniards, nothing would persuade him that the corpses were not to be cooked for supper.

However, kind words, kind looks, and the present of

## THE ATTACK ON THE STOCKADE

that inestimable treasure—a knife—brought him to reason ; and he told Amyas that he belonged to a Spaniard who had an *encomienda* of Indians some fifteen miles to the south-west , that he had fled from his master , and lived by hunting for some months past , and having seen the ship where she lay moored , and boarded her in hope of plunder , had been surprised therein by the Spaniards and forced by threats to go with them as a guide in their search for the English . But now came a part of his story which filled the soul of Amyas with delight . He was an Indian of the Llanos , or great savannas which lay to the southward beyond the mountains , and had actually been upon the Orinoco . He had been stolen as a boy by some Spaniards , who had gone down (as was the fashion of the Jesuits even as late as 1790) for the pious purpose of converting the savages by the simple process of catching , baptizing , and making servants of those whom they could carry off and murdering those who resisted their gentle method of salvation . Did he know the way back again ? Who could ask such a question of an Indian ? And the lad's black eyes flashed fire , as Amyas offered him liberty and iron enough for a dozen Indians , if he would lead them through the passes of the mountains , and southward to the mighty river , where lay their golden hopes . Hernando de Serpa , Amyas knew , had tried the same course , which was supposed to be about one hundred and twenty leagues , and failed , being overthrown utterly by the Wikiri Indians , but Amyas knew enough of the Spaniards' brutal method of treating those Indians , to be pretty sure that they had brought that catastrophe upon themselves , and that he might avoid it well enough by that common justice and mercy toward the savages which he had learned from his incomparable tutor , Francis Drake

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

### EXERCISES

1 *Meanings* Explain the following, especially the literary and other allusions

Jack when he climbed the magic beanstalk, La Guayra, Smerwick, Oxenham, Caraccas, Caribs, Llanos; Orinoco, Jesuits

2 *Vocabulary* To produce the old-fashioned effect of the South American forest, Kingsley uses such unusual words as *ceba-tree* and *liana*, *arquebus* and *caliver*. Make a list of such words, and give their meaning

3 *Précis* Summarize the account of the attack upon the stockade

4 *Interpretation* From your reading of the extract, what do you think has happened to the *Rose*, and what does Amyas intend to do?

5 *Literature* Have you read any other book in which you read about an attack upon a stockade? Mention the name of the book and its author, and give an account of the attack

## EDMUND BLUNDEN

### *Undertones of War*

EDMUND BLUNDEN (born 1896) left Christ's Hospital in 1915 to join the Royal Sussex Regiment. Till 1918 he took part in the Great War. His first book of poems was published in 1914.

His book dealing with his war-experiences, *Undertones of War* (1928), is one of the most notable of our war-books. It does not aim at being sensational, but in precise and scholarly prose it reveals in a remarkable manner the effects of the horrors of war upon an acute and sensitive mind.

The following extract describes the experiences of a regiment 'out of the line'.



## OUT OF THE LINE

WE returned to the front line, and after some nights there Penruddock told me that we were going out to rest-billets. I was to go ahead with some non-commissioned officers to take over the accommodation. Other representatives from the other companies would join me next morning early in the Old British Line opposite our former headquarters. I therefore took my party there that night, and gave them word about reappearing at the proper hour, then, entering our little dugout now held by another company's officers, I asked some one's leave to sleep on a bench there. My warmcoat was not adequate, and I was irritably awake in the early day when from his more comfortable lair in the recess the company commander, yawning and stretching, looked over to me and charitably asked, "What's that thing?" I sat up quickly and told him, he stayed with the battalion long enough for me to be equally uncharitable to him, but at that luxurious period there was a wonderful superiority about some of the original officers of the battalion. It made life difficult. When the billeting party was assembled, this haughtiness was again discernible. Man is a splendid animal, wherever possible.

The joyful path away from the line, on that glittering summer morning, was full of pictures for my infant war-mind. History and nature were beginning to harmonize in the quiet of that sector. In the orchard through which we passed immediately, wagons had been dragged together once with casks and farm gear to form barricades; I felt that they should never be disturbed again, and the memorial raised near them to the dead of 1915 im-

## OUT OF THE LINE

plied a closed chapter. The empty farm-houses behind were not yet effigies of agony or mounds of punished, atomized material, they could still shelter, and they did. Their hearths could still boil the pot. Acres of self-sown wheat glistened and sighed as we wound our way between, where rough scattered pits recorded a hurried firing-line of long ago. Life, life abundant sang here and smiled, the lizard ran warless in the warm dust, and the ditches were trembling quick with odd tiny fish, in world as remote as Saturn.

Presently we came to a shrine on a paved road, and near by the houses were still confidently held by their usual families. Their front windows, between the blue shutters, one and all exhibited silk postcards, with excessively loving messages and flags ("The Flags of Civilization") and flowers on them, neighboured by "Venus" pencils, red herrings in tumblers, and chocolate *bouchées* in silver paper. Innocency of life! how it carried one back, so that the long hot walk to Hinges, our due resting-place, was like the flight of a bird. And yet, when war seemed for the time being left behind, belts of barbed wire again appeared, crossing the beet-fields, and wicker-lined trenches curved along waterways and embankments. And yet—so I thought! not having cleared up the point that the defence of a country must be miles in depth.

Had our leaders cleared it up? This may be lightly touched upon as I proceed.

Hinges was a village on the canal from Béthune to Aire, a place of orchards "hidden from day's garish eye," of mud barns, of columned pollards and level flourishing fields. That part of it which we were to inhabit was called Hingette, and adjoined the canal. I found the company commander from whom I was to take over sitting pleasantly in the tall open parlour window of a big farm-house, just as Shelley would have been sitting, he received me as a sort of fellow-collegian, and my business was made easy for me. Such characters and occasions were the charm of the B.E.F. There was a

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

grace that war never overcast. If you except the great refuse reservoir in the middle of the farmyard, this place was in itself one of the happiest to which my lamented battalion ever went. But the men had hardly exchanged nods with sleep, next morning, when a training programme was put into force. One of the few advantages which I had fancied we should have in coming to France was a relaxation from the artificial party of army life—'eyewash,' in the term then universal. But here, after two or three weeks in the line, was a battalion undergoing the same old treatment, which uselessly reduced its chances of rest. Uselessly? I believe so. These men were volunteers of the first months of the war, most willing but most intelligent, and the only effect that petty militarism and worrying restlessness had on them was to set them grumbling. About now, the signallers revealed the general feeling by sending in to the Colonel a round robin protesting against field punishment awarded one of them. This beautiful but unregimental act was the cause of a parade, when the Colonel spoke with surprise and anger; yet I believe he knew what was really annoying his subjects, without being able to change the orders from above.

The training programme did not last long, nor did I visit our farm-house billets with the gossip of the moment many evenings. About five one afternoon, when the greener light began to cool the senses, and many a letter was being written and many a pack of cards starting to run, all officers were called to battalion headquarters. Mystery. theory. premonition. "I told you so, Limbery," muttered Charlwood, with a doleful smile. "I knew we should be tooling up the road again in a couple of nights." What exactly was amiss at the line the adjutant, speaking in his dry, deliberate way, did not announce. There was something in the air, he admitted, and the battalion was to take over trenches south of the Canal. Another doleful smile from Charlwood to Limbery-Buse. The conference scattered to the various billets with no delay, and the companies prepared for the

## OUT OF THE LINE

new trench tour. Floors were swept clean, stores of bully beef and bombs examined and found correct, and all else attended to. But I, to my surprise, was not to go up at once to the trenches, an elementary gas course, lasting three days, was prescribed for me. I nevertheless watched the company depart down the muddy by-road past the ovens and tents in a depressed mood, nor was I alone in regret. The smelly little farmyard dog, who had been taken off his chain in the night by our humanitarians, and walked out into a liberty which he could scarcely remember since his puppy days, also gazed, and hung a mournful head.

It must have been during this brief encampment at Hinges that Kapp ceased to philosophize, scandalize, harmonize, and anatomize among us, and departed for that mysterious Press Bureau where it was supposed his remarkable faculty for languages would be needed, and, while we lost him, we gained another artist of quality. This was Neville Lytton Tall, of a fine carriage, his outward and physical appearance expressing an intellect rather than a body, he at once attracted me. He was outspoken in his loathing of war, he did not rely on his rank to cover all points of argument or action, and his gallantry in going through the dirtiness, the abnegations of service, the attack upon all his refinement, was great. It naturally remained unrecognized by the crasser part of the officers and men. He commanded the company with thoroughness and caution, and sat at our mess, piously endeavouring to keep up his vegetarian habits (apart from an occasional ration of bacon) and to keep alive a spirit of artistic insight without refusing military method.

So the company has gone down the road, and doesn't know quite where it is bound for; and here, with my batman Shearing, lately a gardener, I am free for an hour to play *Il Penseroso* round the cherry orchard and between the orderly thrifty root-crops. I will stay in this farm-house while the gas course lasts—the school is only

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

a few miles away, at Essars—and get the old peasant in the evenings to recite more *La Fontaine* to me, in the Béthune dialect, and walk out to see the neighbouring inns and shrines, and read—Bless me, Kapp has gone away with my *John Clare*!

He has the book yet, for all I know, has he the memory of Hinges?

On the next morning, that had risen in calm glories as though there were no war, I took my way along the wide canal towards Essars, swinging my stick, and noticing the 'twined flowers,' the yellowhammer and the wagtail. The water was clear, glittering roach buoyed themselves in the light, young jack shooting into deeper water as I passed flicked up the mud in the shallows. A Red Cross barge steamed in state along the channel. Presently I turned across the fields, and the spire of Essars and the contrasting stream of cars and lorries came in view among the rich mantles of trees, which canopied the road from Béthune to Neuve Chapelle. The gas school was a little cluster of huts in this busily traversed yet unruined village, and here a number of us went through gas chambers and took spasmodic notes of lectures. It was all very leisurely, alarming and useful. A slight asthma caused me to be exempt from running with the flannel bag over my head. The flannel mask was respected, for (as I had already noticed in the line) it kept your ears warm! It smelt odd and breathing in it became sugary, while the goggles seemed to be inevitably veiled with moisture, highly beneficial in a crisis to one's opponent.

At lunch-time I vanished into the fields and, under one knotty willow by a dyke, ate my rations, still, as an angler of sorts, studying the waters. But one of my constant instinctive terrors in early life had been the sudden sight of great fish lurking; and I feel to-day the start with which I became aware, in this little dyke, under a thick hanging branch, of a ponderous and ugly carp. He set eyes on me almost as soon, and dived. I mention this, to show what tenacity the fancy had in

## OUT OF THE LINE

days of 'grim reality,' and actual monsters. One lunch-hour I spent less irrationally with two officers of the Gloucester Pioneer Battalion, which had an enviable reputation with us as a gathering of good fellows altogether; my friends were Hillier and Crockford, whom I see yet in the *al fresco* spirit of that leafy corner. There was poetry about these two, nor was I afraid to speak of poetry to them, and so long as the war allowed a country-rectory quietude and lawny coolness three kilometres from the line, and summer had even greater liberty than usual to multiply his convolvulus, his linnetts and butterflies, while life was nevertheless threatened continually with the last sharp turnings into the unknown, an inestimable sweetness of feeling beyond Corot or Marvell made itself felt through all routine and enforcement; an unexampled simplicity of desire awoke in the imagination and rejoiced like Ariel in a cowslip-bell. It was for a short time, but even that decree heightened the measure.

### EXERCISES

1 *Vocabulary* Make up a list of war-words, such as *rest-billets*, and give their meanings

2 *Interpretation* Take the last paragraph on p 94, beginning, "At lunch-time"

(a) Rewrite the paragraph in your own way Give your version a title

(b) Explain the expressions, *country-rectory quietude*, *lawny coolness*, *an inestimable sweetness of feeling beyond Corot or Marvell*, and *like Ariel in a cowslip-bell*.

3 *Composition*

(a) Write a letter from a soldier in rest-billets to a relative at home

(b) Describe some event during the War of 1914-18

## WASHINGTON IRVING

### *Bracebridge Hall*

WASHINGTON IRVING (1783-1859), a famous American author, specialized in historical and descriptive work. He was fond of visiting Britain and the continent of Europe, and his best-known book, *The Sketch Book* (1820), consists chiefly of articles describing this country as he saw it.

Our extract is from *Bracebridge Hall*. It gives a conventional account of an old-fashioned English Christmas. This, though it may appear rather obvious to English readers, was, nevertheless, very fresh and lively to Americans of his period.

## AN OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS

**I**T was a brilliant moonlight night, but extremely cold; our chaise whirled rapidly over the frozen ground; the postboy smacked his whip incessantly, and a part of the time his horses were on the gallop "He knows where he is going," said my companion, laughing, "and is eager to arrive in time for some of the merriment and good cheer of the servants' hall. My father, you must know, is a bigoted devotee of the old school, and prides himself upon keeping up something of old English hospitality. He is a tolerable specimen of what you will rarely meet with nowadays in its purity, the old English country gentleman, for our men of fortune spend so much of their time in town, and fashion is carried so much into the country, that the strong rich peculiarities of ancient rural life are almost polished away. My father, however, determined in his own mind, that there was no condition more truly honourable and enviable than that of a country gentleman on his paternal lands, and therefore passes the whole of his time on his estate."

We had passed for some time along the wall of a park, and at length the chaise stopped at the gate. It was in a heavy magnificent old style, of iron bars, fancifully wrought at top into flourishes and flowers. The huge square columns that supported the gate were surmounted by the family crest. Close adjoining was the porter's lodge, sheltered under dark fir-trees, and almost buried in shrubbery.

The postboy rang a large porter's bell, which resounded through the still frosty air, and was answered by the distant barking of dogs, with which the mansion-house



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seemed garrisoned. An old woman immediately appeared at the gate. As the moonlight fell strongly upon her, I had a full view of a little primitive dame, dressed very much in the antique taste, with a neat kerchief and stomacher, and her silver hair peeping from under a cap of snowy whiteness. She came courtesying forth, with many expressions of simple joy at seeing her young master. Her husband, it seemed, was up at the house keeping Christmas Eve in the servants' hall; they could not do without him, as he was the best hand at a song and story in the household.

My friend proposed that we should alight and walk through the park to the hall, which was at no great distance, while the chaise should follow on. Our road wound through a noble avenue of trees, among the naked branches of which the moon glittered, as she rolled through the deep vault of a cloudless sky. The lawn beyond was sheeted with a slight covering of snow, which here and there sparkled as the moonbeams caught a frosty crystal, and at a distance might be seen a thin transparent vapour, stealing up from the low grounds and threatening gradually to shroud the landscape.

My companion looked around him with transport. "How often," said he, "have I scampered up this avenue, on returning home on school vacations! How often have I played under these trees when a boy! I feel a degree of filial reverence for them, as we look up to those who have cherished us in childhood. My father was always scrupulous in exacting our holidays, and having us around him on family festivals. He used to direct and superintend our games with the strictness that some parents do the studies of their children. He was very particular that we should play the old English games according to their original form, and consulted old books for precedent and authority for every 'merrie disport'; yet I assure you there never was pedantry so delightful. It was the policy of the good old gentleman to make his children feel that home was the happiest place in the

## AN OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS

world; and I value this delicious home-feeling as one of the choicest gifts a parent could bestow ”

We were interrupted by the clamour of a troupe of dogs of all sorts and sizes, “ mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound, and curs of low degree,” that, disturbed by the ring of the porter’s bell and the rattling of the chaise, came bounding, open-mouthed, across the lawn

“ — — The little dogs and all,  
Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me ! ”

cried Bracebridge, laughing At the sound of his voice the bark was changed into a yelp of delight, and in a moment he was surrounded and almost overpowered by the caresses of the faithful animals

As we approached the house, we heard the sound of music, and now and then a burst of laughter, from one end of the building This, Bracebridge said, must proceed from the servants’ hall, where a great deal of revelry was permitted, and even encouraged by the squire, throughout the twelve days of Christmas, provided everything was done conformably to ancient usage Here were kept up the old games of hoodman blind, shoe the wild mare, hot cockles, steal the white loaf, bob apple, and snap-dragon the Yule log and Christmas candle were regularly burnt, and the mistletoe, with its white berries, hung up, to the imminent peril of all the pretty housemaids

On our arrival being announced, the squire came out to receive us, accompanied by his two other sons, one a young officer in the army, home on leave of absence; the other an Oxonian, just from the university. The squire was a fine, healthy-looking old gentleman, with silver hair curling lightly round an open florid countenance, in which the physiognomist, with the advantage, like myself, of a previous hint or two, might discover a singular mixture of whim and benevolence.

The family meeting was warm and affectionate as the evening was far advanced, the squire would not permit

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us to change our travelling dresses, but ushered us at once to the company, which was assembled in a large old-fashioned hall.

It was really delightful to see the old squire seated in his hereditary elbow chair, by the hospitable fireside of his ancestors, and looking around him like the sun of a system, beaming warmth and gladness to every heart. Even the very dog that lay stretched at his feet, as he lazily shifted his position and yawned, would look fondly up in his master's face, wag his tail against the floor, and stretch himself again to sleep, confident of kindness and protection. There is an emanation from the heart in genuine hospitality which cannot be described, but is immediately felt, and puts the stranger at once at his ease. I had not been seated many minutes by the comfortable hearth of the worthy old cavalier, before I found myself as much at home as if I had been one of the family.

Supper was announced shortly after our arrival. It was served up in a spacious oaken chamber, the panels of which shone with wax, and around which were several family portraits decorated with holly and ivy. Besides the accustomed lights, two great wax tapers, called Christmas candles, wreathed with greens, were placed on a highly polished beaufet among the family plate. The table was abundantly spread with substantial fare; but the squire made his supper of frumenty, a dish made of wheat cakes boiled in milk, with rich spices, being a standing dish in old times for Christmas Eve.

I was happy to find my old friend, minced pie, in the retinue of the feast; and finding him to be perfectly orthodox, and that I need not be ashamed of my predilection, I greeted him with all the warmth wherewith we usually greet an old and very genteel acquaintance.

The mirth of the company was greatly promoted by the humours of an eccentric personage whom Mr Bracebridge always addressed with the quaint appellation of Master Simon. He was a tight, brisk little man, with

## AN OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS

the air of an arrant old bachelor. His nose was shaped like the bill of a parrot; his face slightly pitted with the small-pox, with a dry, perpetual bloom on it, like a frost-bitten leaf in autumn. He had an eye of great quickness and vivacity, with a drollery and lurking waggery of expression that was irresistible. He was evidently the wit of the family, dealing very much in sly jokes and innuendoes with the ladies, and making infinite merriment by harping upon old themes, which, unfortunately, my ignorance of the family chronicles did not permit me to enjoy. It seemed to be his great delight during supper to keep a young girl next him in a continual agony of stifled laughter, in spite of her awe of the reproving looks of her mother, who sat opposite. Indeed, he was the idol of the younger part of the company, who laughed at everything he said or did, and at every turn of his countenance; I could not wonder at it, for he must have been a miracle of accomplishments in their eyes. He could imitate Punch and Judy, make an old woman of his hand, with the assistance of a burnt cork and pocket-handkerchief; and cut an orange into such a ludicrous caricature, that the young folks were ready to die with laughing.

I was let briefly into his history by Frank Bracebridge. He was an old bachelor, of a small independent income, which, by careful management, was sufficient for all his wants. He revolved through the family system like a vagrant comet in its orbit, sometimes visiting one branch, and sometimes another quite remote, as is often the case with gentlemen of extensive connexions and small fortunes in England. He had a chirping, buoyant disposition, always enjoying the present moment; and his frequent change of scene and company prevented his acquiring those rusty unaccommodating habits, with which old bachelors are so uncharitably charged. He was a complete family chronicle, being versed in the genealogy, history, and intermarriages of the whole house of Bracebridge, which made him a great favourite with the old folks; he

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

was a beau of all the elder ladies and superannuated spinsters, among whom he was habitually considered rather a young fellow, and he was master of the revels among the children; so that there was not a more popular being in the sphere in which he moved than Mr Simon Bracebridge. Of late years, he had resided almost entirely with the squire, to whom he had become a factotum, and whom he particularly delighted by jumping with his humour in respect to old times, and by having a scrap of an old song to suit every occasion. We had presently a specimen of his last-mentioned talent, for no sooner was supper removed, and spiced wines and other beverages peculiar to the season introduced, than Master Simon was called on for a good old Christmas song. He bethought himself for a moment, and then, with a sparkle of the eye, and a voice that was by no means bad, excepting that it ran occasionally into a falsetto, like the notes of a split reed, he quivered forth a quaint old ditty

Now Christmas is come,  
Let us beat up the drum,  
And call all our neighbours together,  
And when they appear,  
Let us make them such cheer,  
As will keep out the wind and the weather, etc

The supper had disposed every one to gaiety, and an old harper was summoned from the servants' hall, where he had been strumming all the evening. He was a kind of hanger-on, I was told, of the establishment, and, though ostensibly a resident of the village, was oftener to be found in the squire's kitchen than his own home, the old gentleman being fond of the sound of 'harp in hall.'

The dance, like most dances after supper, was a merry one; some of the older folks joined in it, and the squire himself figured down several couples with a partner, with whom he affirmed he had danced at every Christmas for nearly half a century. Master Simon, who seemed to be a kind of connecting-link between the old times and the new, and to be withal a little antiquated in the taste

## AN OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS

of his accomplishments, evidently piqued himself on his dancing, and was endeavouring to gain credit by the heel and toe, rigadon, and other graces of the ancient school; but he had unluckily assorted himself with a little romping girl from boarding-school, who, by her wild vivacity, kept him continually on the stretch, and defeated all his sober attempts at elegance such are the ill-assorted matches to which antique gentlemen are unfortunately prone.

The party now broke up for the night with the kind-hearted old custom of shaking hands. As I passed through the hall, on my way to my chamber, the dying embers of the Yule log still sent forth a dusky glow, and had it not been the season when "no spirit dares stir abroad," I should have been half tempted to steal from my room at midnight, and peep whether the fairies might not be at their revels about the hearth.

### EXERCISES

1 *Vocabulary* Find the meaning and derivation of each of the following words. Compose sentences to show the use of them.

chaise, incessantly, enviable, paternal, fancifully, primitive; antique, avenue, crystal, florid, physiognomist, hereditary, ancestors, cavalier, orthodox, genteel, eccentric, arrant, vagrant, buoyant, unaccommodating, chronicle, genealogy, superannuated, sphere, factotum, falsetto; gaiety, vivacity, elegance

2 *Meanings* Turn the following into simpler prose

- (a) The strong rich peculiarities of ancient rural life are almost polished away
- (b) Provided everything was done conformably to ancient usage
- (c) To the imminent peril of all the pretty housemaids
- (d) There is an emanation from the heart in genuine hospitality
- (e) The table was abundantly spread with substantial fare
- (f) Addressed with the quaint appellation of Master Simon
- (g) A little antiquated in the taste of his accomplishments.
- (h) He piqued himself on his dancing

3 *Précis* Compress this account of Christmas Eve into two or three paragraphs of moderate length.

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### 4 Interpretation

(a) Take the paragraph beginning, " My companion looked around " (p 98).

(i) Rewrite in simpler language, using the third person, and avoiding exclamations

(ii) Explain in particular the expressions, *I feel a degree of filial reverence for them* *My father was always scrupulous in exacting our holidays*

(iii) Point out any figures of speech

(b) Take the paragraph beginning, " The mirth of the company " (p 100)

(i) Paraphrase into simpler English, cutting down the length by about half

(ii) Give a title to the paragraph

5 Literature Do you know any other book that describes Christmas Eve? Mention the book and its author, and compare its account with that of Washington Irving

### 6 Composition

(a) Give your own account of a Christmas Party

(b) Write an essay on " Holiday Games and Amusements "

(c) Write an essay on " A Grand Old English Gentleman "

*SPRING TERM*





## FRANCES BURNEY

### *Diary*

FRANCES BURNEY (1752-1840), whose married name was MADAME D'ARBLAY, is the earliest of our lady novelists. Her novels, *Evelina* (1778) and *Cecilia* (1782), are of high literary merit, and attracted the favourable attention of Dr Johnson (see p. 129).

From her youth Miss Burney, whose father was a well-known doctor, played a prominent part in society, in which her quick wit, added to her subsequent literary reputation, made her always welcome. Rather to her disadvantage, she accepted the court appointment of assistant-keeper of the Queen's robes, at a salary of £200 a year. This post brought its responsibilities, as can be seen from the following extract from her *Diary*. Her extreme anxiety, as is shown in the extract, was due to her need to attend the Queen's commands.

As a whole her *Diary*, kept over a long period, is a lively and accurate picture of the society of her time, and is worthy of being placed near to the diaries of Evelyn and Pepys.

## AN EVENING'S ADVENTURES

THE Queen's Birthday—a Ball at St James's Palace ]  
I had received orders from the Queen to go out at the end of the second country dance. At the appointed moment I slipped through the door, and passed alone and quietly to Mr Rhamus's apartment, which was appropriated for the company to wait in. Here I desired a servant I met with to call my man—he was not to be found. I went down the stairs, and made them call him aloud, by my name, all to no purpose. Then the chairmen were called, but called also in vain.

What to do I knew not, though I was still in a part of the palace, it was separated by many courts, avenues, passages and alleys, from the Queen's or my own apartments, and though I had so lately passed them, I could not remember the way, nor at that late hour could I have walked, dressed as I then was, and the ground wet with recent rain, even if I had had a servant. I had therefore ordered the chair allotted me for these days, but chair and chairmen and footmen were alike out of the way.

My fright lest the Queen should wait for me was very serious. I believe there are state apartments through which she passes, and therefore I had no chance to know when she retired from the ball-room. Yet could I not stir, and was forced to return to the room whence I came, in order to wait for John.

I now found a young clergyman standing by the fire. I suppose my anxiety was visible, for he instantly inquired if he could assist me. I declined his offer, but walked up and down, making frequent questions about my chair and John. He then very civilly said :

## AN EVENING'S ADVENTURES

"You seem distressed, ma'am; would you permit me the honour to see you to your chair, or, if it is not come, as you seem hurried, would you trust me to see you home?"

I thanked him, but could not accept his services. He was sorry, he said, that I refused him, but could not wonder as he was a stranger. At length a hackney chair was procured me. My new acquaintance would take no denial to handing me to the chair. When I got in, I told the men to carry me to the palace.

"We are there now!" cried they. "What part of the palace?"

I was now in a distress the most extraordinary. I really knew not my own direction. I had always gone to my apartment in a chair, and had been carried by chairmen officially appointed, and, except that it was in St James's Palace, I knew nothing of my own situation.

"Near the park," I told them, and saw my new esquire look utterly amazed at me.

"Ma'am," said he, "half the palace is in the park!"

"I don't know how to direct," cried I, in the greatest embarrassment, "but it is somewhere between Pall Mall and the Park."

"I know where the lady lives well enough," cried one of the chairmen, "'tis in St James's Street."

"No, no," cried I, "'tis in St James's Palace."

"Up with the chair!" cried the other man, "I know best, 'tis in South Audley Street, I know the lady well enough."

Think what a situation at the moment! I found they had both been drinking the Queen's health till they knew not what they said, and could with difficulty stand. Yet they lifted me up, and though I called in the most terrible fright to be let out, they carried me down the steps.

I now actually screamed for help, believing they would carry me off to South Audley Street, and now my good genius, who had waited patiently in the crowd, forcibly

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

stopped the chairmen, who abused him violently, and opened the door himself, and I ran back to the hall.

He begged me to go again upstairs, but my apprehension about the Queen prevented me. I knew she was to have nobody but me, and that her jewels, though few, were to be intrusted back to the Queen's house to no other hands. I must, I said, go, be it in what manner it might. All I could devise was to summon Mr Rhamus, the page. Mr Rhamus was nowhere to be found, he was already supposed to be gone to the Queen's house to wait the arrival of his Majesty. This news redoubled my fear; and now my new acquaintance desired me to employ him in making inquiries for me as to the direction I wanted.

It was almost ridiculous, in the midst of my distress, to be thus at a loss for an address to myself! I felt averse to speaking my name amongst so many listeners, and only told him he would much oblige me by finding out a direction to Mrs Haggerdorn's rooms.

He went upstairs, and returning, said he could now direct the chairmen, if I did not fear trusting them.

I did fear—I even shook with fear—yet my horror of disappointing the Queen upon such a night prevailed over all my reluctance, and I ventured once more into the chair, thanking this excellent Samaritan, and begging him to give the direction very particularly.

Imagine, however, my gratitude and my relief, when, instead of hearing the direction, I heard only these words: "Follow me!"

And then did this truly benevolent young man play the footman, in walking by the side of the chair till we came to an alley, when he bid them turn; but they answered him with an oath, and ran on with me, till the poles ran against a wall, for they had entered a passage in which there was no outlet!

I would fain have got out, but they would not hear me; they would only pull the chair back, and go on another way. But my guardian angel told them to follow

## AN EVENING'S ADVENTURES

him or not at their peril, and then walked before the chair.

We next came to a court where we were stopped by the sentinels. They said they had orders not to admit any hackney chairs. The chairmen vowed they would make way, I called out aloud to be set down, the sentinels said they would run their bayonets through the first man that attempted to dispute their orders. I then screamed out again to be set down, and my new and good friend peremptorily forced them to stop, and opening the door with violence, offered me his arm, saying :

“ You had better trust yourself with me, ma'am ”

Most thankfully I now accepted what so fruitlessly I had declined, and I held by his arm, and we walked on together—but neither of us knew whither, nor the right way from the wrong! It was really a terrible situation.

The chairmen followed us, clamorous for money, and full of abuse. They demanded half a crown, my companion refused to listen to such an imposition, my shaking hand could find no purse, and I begged him to pay them what they asked, that they might leave us. He did, and when they were gone, I shook less, and was able to pay that one part of the debt I was now contracting.

We wandered about, heaven knows where, in a way the most alarming and horrible to myself imaginable, for I never knew where I was. It was midnight—I concluded the Queen waiting for me. It was wet. My head was full dressed. I was under the care of a total stranger, and I knew not which side to take, wherever we came. Inquiries were vain. The sentinels alone were in sight, and they are so continually changed that they knew no more of Mrs Haggerdorn than if she had never resided here.

At length I spied a door open, and I begged to enter it at a venture, for information. Fortunately a person stood in the passage who instantly spoke to me by my name; I never heard that sound with more glee. To me he was a stranger, but I suppose he had seen me

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in some of the apartments. I begged him to direct me straight to the Queen's rooms. He did; and then I took leave of my most humane new friend, with a thousand acknowledgments for his benevolence and services.

I found myself just in time

### EXERCISES

1 *Interpretation* Point out any details in the passage that show the events occurred in the eighteenth century

2. *History* The date of this entry in Madame D'Arblay's *Diary* is January 18, 1787 Who was the Queen, and who was the King, who are mentioned? What important historical events were about to happen at that time?

3 *Literature* Mention any other writer, well known in literature, who wrote a diary Compare his style of diary-writing with that of Madame D'Arblay

## JOSEPH ADDISON

### *Spectator*

JOSEPH ADDISON (1672-1719) shares with his school-friend SIR RICHARD STEELE (1672-1729) the distinction of being the best of our earlier journalists. In 1709 Steele began the *Tatler*, the ancestor of innumerable magazines, and Addison admired it so much that he offered his services as a contributor. His offer was gladly accepted by Steele, and gradually Addison became the dominating force in the *Tatler*, as well as in its successor, the *Spectator*, which superseded the *Tatler* in 1711. For these journals Addison and Steele wrote essays on all kinds of subjects—political, literary, religious, and so on. In this manner they were founding the English essay, as well as creating a new school of journalism.

"The Vision of Mirzah," which now follows, appeared in No. 159 of the *Spectator*, dated September 1, 1711. It shows how Addison kept in touch with popular fashion, for at that time the Eastern type of tale was all the rage, owing to the issue of the first translation of *The Arabian Nights*, by a Frenchman named Galland, in the year 1704.



## THE VISION OF MIRZAH

WHEN I was at Grand Cairo, I picked up several Oriental manuscripts, which I have still by me. Among others I met with one entitled, *The Visions of Mirzah*, which I have read over with great pleasure. I intend to give it to the public when I have no other entertainment for them, and shall begin with the first vision, which I have translated word for word as follows :

“ On the fifth day of the moon, which according to the custom of my forefathers I always keep holy, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hills of Bagdad, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer. As I was here airing myself on the tops of the mountains, I fell into a profound contemplation on the vanity of human life, and passing from one thought to another, ‘ Surely,’ said I, ‘ man is but a shadow, and life a dream ’ Whilst I was thus musing, I cast my eyes towards the summit of a rock that was not far from me, where I discovered one in the habit of a shepherd, with a little musical instrument in his hand. As I looked upon him he applied it to his lips, and began to play upon it. The sound of it was exceeding sweet, and wrought into a variety of tunes that were inexpressibly melodious, and altogether different from any thing I had ever heard. They put me in mind of those heavenly airs that are played to the departed souls of good men upon their first arrival in Paradise, to wear out the impressions of their last agonies, and qualify them for the pleasures of that happy place. My heart melted away in secret raptures.

“ I had been often told that the rock before me was the

## THE VISION OF MIRZAH

haunt of a genius; and that several had been entertained with music who had passed by it, but never heard that the musician had before made himself visible. When he had raised my thoughts by those transporting airs which he played, to taste the pleasures of his conversation, as I looked upon him like one astonished, he beckoned to me, and by the waving of his hand directed me to approach the place where he sat. I drew near with that reverence which is due to a superior nature, and as my heart was entirely subdued by the captivating strains I had heard, I fell down at his feet and wept. The genius smiled upon me with a look of compassion and affability that familiarized him to my imagination, and at once dispelled all the fears and apprehensions with which I approached him. He lifted me from the ground, and taking me by the hand, 'Mirzah,' said he, 'I have heard thee in thy soliloquies, follow me.'

"He then led me to the highest pinnacle of the rock, and placing me on the top of it—'Cast thy eyes eastward,' said he, 'and tell me what thou seest'—'I see,' said I, 'a huge valley, and a prodigious tide of water rolling through it'—'The valley that thou seest,' said he, 'is the Vale of Misery, and the tide of water that thou seest is part of the great tide of eternity'—'What is the reason,' said I, 'that the tide I see rises out of a thick mist at one end, and again loses itself in a thick mist at the other?'—'What thou seest,' said he, 'is that portion of eternity which is called time, measured out by the sun, and reaching from the beginning of the world to its consummation'—'Examine now,' said he, 'this sea that is bounded with darkness at both ends, and tell me what thou discoverest in it'—'I see a bridge,' said I, 'standing in the midst of the tide.'—'The bridge thou seest,' said he, 'is human life; consider it attentively.' Upon a more leisurely survey of it, I found that it consisted of threescore and ten entire arches, with several broken arches, which, added to those that were entire, made up the number about a hundred. As I was counting

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the arches, the genius told me that this bridge consisted at first of a thousand arches : but that a great flood swept away the rest, and left the bridge in the ruinous condition I now beheld it ' But tell me further,' said he, ' what thou discoverest on it.'—' I see multitudes of people passing over it,' said I, ' and a black cloud hanging on each end of it ' As I looked more attentively, I saw several of the passengers dropping through the bridge into the great tide that flowed underneath it. and, upon further examination, perceived there were innumerable trap-doors that lay concealed in the bridge, which the passengers no sooner trod upon, but they fell through them into the tide, and immediately disappeared These hidden pit-falls were set very thick at the entrance of the bridge, so that throngs of people no sooner broke through the cloud, but many of them fell into them They grew thinner towards the middle, but multiplied and lay closer together towards the end of the arches that were entire

" There were indeed some persons, but their number was very small, that continued a kind of hobbling march on the broken arches, but fell through one after another, being quite tired and spent with so long a walk

" I passed some time in the contemplation of this wonderful structure, and the great variety of objects which it presented My heart was filled with a deep melancholy to see several dropping unexpectedly in the midst of mirth and jollity, and catching at every thing that stood by them to save themselves. Some were looking up towards the heavens in a thoughtful posture, and in the midst of a speculation stumbled and fell out of sight. Multitudes were very busy in the pursuit of bubbles that glittered in their eyes and danced before them, but often when they thought themselves within the reach of them, their footing failed, and down they sank. In this confusion of objects, I observed some with scimitars in their hands, and others with vessels, who ran to and fro upon the bridge, thrusting several persons on trap-doors which

## THE VISION OF MIRZAH

did not seem to lie in their way, and which they might have escaped had they not been thus forced upon them.

"The genius seeing me indulge myself in this melancholy prospect, told me I had dwelt long enough upon it 'Take thine eyes off the bridge,' said he, 'and tell me if thou yet seest any thing thou dost not comprehend' Upon looking up, 'What mean,' said I, 'those great flights of birds that are perpetually hovering about the bridge, and settling upon it from time to time? I see vultures, harpies, ravens, cormorants, and among many other feathered creatures several little winged boys, that perch in great numbers upon the middle arches'— 'These,' said the genius, 'are Envy, Avarice, Superstition, Despair, Love, with the like cares and passions that infest human life'

"I here fetched a deep sigh. 'Alas,' said I, 'man was made in vain! how is he given away to misery and mortality! tortured in life, and swallowed up in death!' The genius, being moved with compassion towards me, bid me quit so uncomfortable a prospect 'Look no more,' said he, 'on man in the first stage of his existence, in his setting out for eternity, but cast thine eye on that thick mist into which the tide bears the several generations of mortals that fall into it' I directed my sight as I was ordered, and (whether or no the good genius strengthened it with any supernatural force, or dissipated part of the mist that was before too thick for the eye to penetrate) I saw the valley opening at the further end, and spreading forth into an immense ocean, that had a huge rock of adamant running through the midst of it, and dividing it into two equal parts. The clouds still rested on one half of it, insomuch that I could discover nothing in it: but the other appeared to me a vast ocean planted with innumerable islands, that were covered with fruits and flowers, and interwoven with a thousand little shining seas that ran among them. I could see persons dressed in glorious habits, with garlands upon their heads, passing among the trees, lying down by the sides of

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

fountains, or resting on beds of flowers; and could hear a confused harmony of singing-birds, falling water, human voices, and musical instruments Gladness grew in me upon the discovery of so delightful a scene I wished for the wings of an eagle, that I might fly away to those happy seats. but the genius told me there was no passage to them, except through the gates of death that I saw opening every moment upon the bridge. 'The islands,' said he, 'that lie so fresh and green before thee, and with which the whole face of the ocean appears spotted as far as thou canst see, are more in number than the sands on the sea-shore, there are myriads of islands behind those which thou here discoverest, reaching further than thine eye, or even thine imagination can extend itself These are the mansions of good men after death, who, according to the degree and kinds of virtue in which they excelled, are distributed among these several islands, which abound with pleasures of different kinds and degrees, suitable to the relishes and perfections of those who are settled in them; every island is a paradise accommodated to its respective inhabitants Are not these, O Mirzah, habitations worth contending for? Does life appear miserable, that gives thee opportunities of earning such a reward? Is death to be feared, that will convey thee to so happy an existence? Think not man was made in vain, who has such an eternity reserved for him' I gazed with inexpressible pleasure on these happy islands 'At length,' said I, 'show me now, I beseech thee, the secrets that lie hid under those dark clouds which cover the ocean on the other side of the rock of adamant.' The genius making me no answer, I turned about to address myself to him a second time, but I found that he had left me. I then turned again to the vision which I had been so long contemplating, but instead of the rolling tide, the arched bridge, and the happy islands, I saw nothing but the long hollow valley of Bagdad, with oxen, sheep, and camels, grazing upon the sides of it."

## THE VISION OF MIRZAH

### EXERCISES

1. *Vocabulary* Use the following words in sentences of your own composition

oriental, entertainment, devotions, profound, contemplation, vanity, inexpressibly, melodious, raptures, genius, transporting, reverence, affability, familiarized, soliloquies, pinnacle, prodigious, consummation, leisurely, innumerable, melancholy, jollity, posture, speculation, prospect, mortality, supernatural, dissipated, penetrate, adamant, myriads, accommodated

2. *Archaisms* Some slight archaisms are apparent in the prose of Addison. In the second paragraph, for example, we have the word *habit* appearing in the sense of 'clothes'. Find other examples, and give their modern meanings.

3. *Allegory* "The Vision of Mirzah" is an allegory, that is, it has a double meaning. Show how each part of the story, for example the bridge, the arches, the trap-doors, has a second meaning. What is the main idea underlying the story?

4. *Précis* Summarize the story in three or four paragraphs of moderate length.

#### 5. *Literature*

(a) "The Vision of Mirzah" may have been suggested by *The Arabian Nights*. Are there any details in Addison's story to suggest *The Arabian Nights*?

(b) What other allegories are known to you? Describe one more fully, and show how it is an allegory.

#### 6. *Composition*

(a) Write a short Eastern tale, preferably from *The Arabian Nights*.

(b) Write in your own words a Biblical allegory. (This is called a *parable*.)

W. M THACKERAY

*Henry Esmond*

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811-63) was born in India, but he lived nearly all his life in England. At first he had a hard struggle to make his way as a novelist, but *Vanity Fair* (1847) brought his name to the front.

The following pages are from his long historical novel, *Henry Esmond* (1852). When the story opens, Henry Esmond is a lonely, neglected boy, living in the great house of Castlewood, the home of the Viscounts of Castlewood. In the early chapters Lord Castlewood joins a plot to assist James II, the Roman Catholic king who has just been expelled in favour of the Protestants William and Mary. The chief agent in the conspiracy is Father Holt, a Jesuit who is Henry's tutor. The extract describes the melancholy result of the proposed rising.

Later in the story Esmond takes part in the Marlborough wars and has many adventures both at home and abroad. At the very end he emigrates to America and manages the Castlewood estates there.

## THE PLOT THAT FAILED

**I**T was while Doctor Tusher was away at Salisbury that there came a troop of Dragoons with orange scarfs, and quartered in Castlewood, and some of them came up to the Hall, where they took possession, robbing nothing, however, beyond the hen-house and the beer-cellar, and only insisting upon going through the house and looking for papers

The first room they asked to look at was Father Holt's room, of which Harry Esmond brought the key, and they opened the drawers and the cupboards, and tossed over the papers and clothes—but found nothing except his books and clothes, and the vestments in a box by themselves, with which the Dragoons made merry, to Harry Esmond's horror. And to the questions which the gentleman put to Harry, he replied that Father Holt was a very kind man to him, and a very learned man, and Harry supposed would tell him none of his secrets if he had any. He was about eleven years old at this time, and looked as innocent as boys of his age

The family were away more than six months, and when they returned they were in the deepest state of dejection, for King James had been banished, the Prince of Orange was on the throne, and the direst persecutions of those of the Catholic faith were apprehended by my lady, who said she did not believe that there was a word of truth in the promises of toleration that Dutch monster made, or in a single word the perjured wretch said. My lord and lady were in a manner prisoners in their own house; so her ladyship gave the little page to know, who was by this time growing of an age to understand what was passing about



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him, and something of the characters of the people he lived with.

"We are prisoners," says she; "in everything but chains, we are prisoners. Let them come, let them consign me to dungeons, or strike off my head from this poor little throat" (and she clasped it in her long fingers). "The blood of the Esmonds will always flow freely for their kings. We are not like the Churchills—the Judases, who kiss their master and betray him. We know how to suffer, how even to forgive in the royal cause" (no doubt it was to that fatal business of losing the place of Groom of the Posset to which her ladyship alluded, as she did half a dozen times in the day). "Let the tyrant of Orange bring his rack and his odious Dutch tortures—the beast! the wretch! I spit upon him and defy him. Cheerfully will I lay this head upon the block, cheerfully will I accompany my lord to the scaffold. We will cry 'God save King James!' with our dying breath, and smile in the face of the executioner." And she told her page, a hundred times at least, of the particulars of the last interview which she had with his Majesty.

"I flung myself before my liege's feet," she said, "at Salisbury. I devoted myself—my husband—my house, to his cause. Perhaps he remembered old times, when Isabella Esmond was young and fair, perhaps he recalled the day when 'twas not *I* that knelt—at least he spoke to me with a voice that reminded *me* of days gone by. 'Egad!' said his Majesty, 'you should go to the Prince of Orange, if you want anything.' 'No, sire,' I replied, 'I would not yield to a Usurper, the Esmond that would have served your Majesty will never be groom to a traitor's posset.' The royal exile smiled, even in the midst of his misfortune, he deigned to raise me with words of consolation. The Viscount, my husband, himself, could not be angry at the august salute with which he honoured me!"

The public misfortune had the effect of making my lord and his lady better friends than they ever had been since

## THE PLOT THAT FAILED

their courtship. My Lord Viscount had shown both loyalty and spirit, when these were rare qualities in the dispirited party about the King, and the praise he got elevated him not a little in his wife's good opinion, and perhaps in his own. He wakened up from the listless and supine life which he had been leading, was always riding to and fro in consultation with this friend or that of the King's; the page of course knowing little of his doings, but remarking only his greater cheerfulness and altered demeanour

Father Holt came to the Hall constantly, but officiated no longer openly as chaplain, he was always fetching and carrying strangers, military and ecclesiastic (Harry knew the latter, though they came in all sorts of disguises), were continually arriving and departing. My lord made long absences and sudden reappearances, using sometimes the means of exit which Father Holt had employed, though how often the little window in the Chaplain's room let in or let out my lord and his friends, Harry could not tell. He stoutly kept his promise to the Father of not prying, and if at midnight from his little room he heard noises of persons stirring in the next chamber, he turned round to the wall, and hid his curiosity under his pillow until it fell asleep. Of course, he could not help remarking that the priest's journeys were constant, and understanding by a hundred signs that some active though secret business employed him what this was may pretty well be guessed by what soon happened to my lord

No garrison or watch was put into Castlewood when my lord came back, but a guard was in the village, and one or other of them was always on the Green keeping a look-out on our great gate, and those who went in and out. Lockwood said that at night especially every person who came in or went out was watched by the outlying sentries. 'Twas lucky that we had a gate which their Worships knew nothing about. My lord and Father Holt must have made constant journeys at night once or twice little Harry acted as their messenger and discreet little aide-de-camp.

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He remembers he was bidden to go into the village with his fishing-rod, enter certain houses, ask for a drink of water, and tell the good man, "There would be a horse-market at Newbury next 'Thursday,'" and so carry the same message on to the next house on his list

He did not know what the message meant at the time, nor what was happening which may as well, however, for clearness' sake, be explained here. The Prince of Orange being gone to Ireland, where the King was ready to meet him with a great army, it was determined that a great rising of his Majesty's party should take place in this country, and my lord was to head the force in our county. Of late he had taken a greater lead in affairs than before, having the indefatigable Mr Holt at his elbow, and my Lady Viscountess strongly urging him on, and my Lord Sark being in the Tower a prisoner, and Sir Wilmot Crawley, of Queen's Crawley, having gone over to the Prince of Orange's side—my lord became the most considerable person in our part of the county for the affairs of the King.

It was arranged that the regiment of Scots Greys and Dragoons, then quartered at Newbury, should declare for the King on a certain day, when likewise the gentry affected to his Majesty's cause were to come in with their tenants and adherents to Newbury, march upon the Dutch troops at Reading, under Ginckel, and, these overthrown, and their indomitable little master away in Ireland, 'twas thought that our side might move on London itself, and a confident victory was predicted for the King.

As the great matters were in agitation, my lord lost his listless manner, and seemed to gain health, my lady did not scold him, Mr Holt came to and fro, busy always; and little Harry longed to have been a few inches taller, that he might draw a sword in this good cause.

One day, it must have been about the month of June, 1690, my lord, in a great horseman's coat, under which Harry could see the shining of a steel breastplate he had on, called little Harry to him, put the hair off the child's forehead, and kissed him, and bade God bless him in such

## THE PLOT THAT FAILED

an affectionate way as he had never used before. Father Holt blessed him, too, and then they took leave of my Lady Viscountess, who came from her apartment with a pocket handkerchief to her eyes, and her gentlewoman and Mrs Tusher supporting her "You are going to—to ride," says she "Oh, that I might come too!—but in my situation I am forbidden horse exercise"

"We kiss my Lady Marchioness's hand," says Mr Holt

"My lord, God speed you!" she said, stepping up and embracing my lord in a grand manner. "Mr Holt, I ask your blessing" and she knelt down for that, whilst Mrs Tusher tossed her head up

Mr Holt gave the same benediction to the little page, who went down, and held my lord's two stirrups for him to mount there were two servants waiting there, too—and they rode out of Castlewood gate

As they crossed the bridge, Harry could see an officer in scarlet ride up touching his hat, and address my lord

The party stopped, and came to some parley or discussion, which presently ended, my lord putting his horse into a canter after taking off his hat and making a bow to the officer, who rode alongside him step for step. the trooper accompanying him falling back, and riding with my lord's two men They cantered over the Green, and behind the elms (my lord waving his hand, Harry thought), and so they disappeared. That evening we had a great panic, the cow-boy coming in at milking-time, riding one of our horses, which he had found grazing at the outer park-wall

All night my Lady Viscountess was in a very quiet and subdued mood She scarce found fault with anybody; she played at cards for six hours; little page Esmond went to sleep. He prayed for my lord and the good cause before closing his eyes

It was quite in the grey of the morning, when the porter's bell rang, and old Lockwood, waking up, let in one of my lord's servants, who had gone with him in the morning, and who returned with a melancholy story. The

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officer who rode up to my lord had, it appeared, said to him, that it was his duty to inform his lordship that he was not under arrest, but under surveillance, and to request him not to ride abroad that day.

My lord replied that riding was good for his health, that if the Captain chose to accompany him he was welcome; and it was then that he made a bow, and they cantered away together

When he came on to Wansey Down, my lord all of a sudden pulled up, and the party came to a halt at the crossway

"Sir," says he to the officer, "we are four to two, will you be so kind as to take that road, and leave me to go mine?"

"Your road is mine, my lord," says the officer

"Then——" says my lord, but he had no time to say more, for the officer, drawing a pistol, snapped it at his lordship; as at the same moment Father Holt, drawing a pistol, shot the officer through the head. It was done, and the man dead in an instant of time. The orderly, gazing at the officer, looked scared for a moment, and galloped away for his life

"Fire! fire!" cries out Father Holt, sending another shot after the trooper, but the two servants were too much surprised to use their pieces, and my lord calling to them to hold their hands, the fellow got away

"Mr Holt," says Blaise, "gets off his horse, examines the pockets of the dead officer for papers, gives his money to us two, and says, 'The wine is drawn, M le Marquis'—why did he say Marquis to M le Vicomte?'—'we must drink it' "

"The poor gentleman's horse was a better one than that I rode," Blaise continues. "Mr Holt bids me get on him, and so I gave a cut to Whitefoot, and she trotted home. We rode on towards Newbury, we heard firing towards midday: at two o'clock a horseman comes up to us as we were giving our cattle water at an inn—and says, 'All is done! The Ecossais declared an hour too soon—

## THE PLOT THAT FAILED

General Ginckel was down upon them ' The whole thing was at an end.

" ' And we've shot an officer on duty, and let his orderly escape,' says my lord

" ' Blaise,' says Mr Holt, writing two lines on his table-book, one for my lady, and one for you, Master Harry, ' you must go back to Castlewood, and deliver these '—and behold me "

And he gave Harry the two papers He read that to himself, which only said, " Burn the papers in the cupboard, burn this You know nothing about anything." Harry read this, ran upstairs to his mistress's apartment, where the gentlewoman slept near to the door, made her bring a light and wake my lady, into whose hands he gave the paper She was a wonderful object to look at in her night attire, nor had Harry ever seen the like.

As soon as she had the paper in her hand, Harry stepped back to the Chaplain's room, opened the secret cupboard over the fireplace, burned all the papers in it, and, as he had seen the priest do before, took down one of his reverence's manuscript sermons, and half burned that in the brazier By the time the papers were quite destroyed it was daylight Harry ran back to his mistress again. Her gentlewoman ushered him again into her ladyship's chamber, she told him (from behind her curtains) to bid the coach be got ready, and that she would ride away anon

But the mysteries of her ladyship's toilet were as awfully long on this day as on any other, and, long after the coach was ready, my lady was still attiring herself. And just as the Viscountess stepped forth from her room, ready for departure, young John Lockwood comes running up from the village with news that a lawyer, three officers, and twenty or four-and-twenty soldiers, were marching thence upon the house. John had but two minutes the start of them, and, ere he had well told his story, the troop rode into our courtyard.

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### EXERCISES

1 *Meanings*. Explain the references (chiefly historical) in the following

- (a) Dragoons with orange scarfs
- (b) The vestments in a box by themselves
- (c) The promises of toleration that Dutch monster made
- (d) We are not like the Churchills—the Judases
- (e) Their indomitable little master away in Ireland
- (f) Mrs Tusher tossed her head up
- (g) Why did he say Marquis to M<sup>le</sup> Vicomte?
- (h) The Ecossais declared an hour too soon

2 *History* Write a brief account of the historical events that serve as a background to this part of Henry Esmond's story.

3 *Précis* Summarize the story of the attempted rebellion.

4 *Composition*

- (a) Describe the character of William of Orange
- (b) Tell the story of the unsuccessful rising, as told by an officer of the Scots Greys

## JAMES BOSWELL

### *Life of Dr Johnson*

JAMES BOSWELL (1740-95), the son of a Scottish judge, was himself a lawyer. His chief interest in life was, however, his friendship with the famous Dr Johnson which lasted more than twenty years. The results of his association with Dr Johnson are revealed in his monumental *Life of Dr Johnson* (1791), published seven years after Johnson's death.

Among biographies, Boswell's takes a place in the very first rank. For fullness, truth to life, sympathy, and insight the book is unrivalled. No detail was too minute for Boswell to include in his book, no task was too laborious for him to undertake for the same good cause. The result is a masterpiece in biography.

Our extract deals with an incident that occurred shortly after Boswell was first introduced to Johnson in May, 1763. The John Wilkes who appears was a notorious 'Radical,' who had attacked royalty and other institutions dear to the Tory mind of Johnson. Hence Boswell's somewhat mischievous desire to bring them together is easily understood.

Among other things the extract illustrates Johnson's remarkable powers of conversation and Boswell's remarkable skill and industry in recording them.



## JOHNSON AND WILKES

I AM now to record a very curious incident in Dr Johnson's life, which fell under my observation; of which *pars magna fui*, and which I am persuaded will, with the liberal-minded, be much to his credit

My desire of being acquainted with celebrated men of every description had made me, much about the same time, obtain an introduction to Dr Samuel Johnson, and to John Wilkes, Esq. Two men more different could perhaps not be selected out of mankind. They had even attacked one another with some asperity in their writings, yet I lived in habits of friendship with both. I could fully relish the excellence of each, for I have ever delighted in that intellectual chemistry which can separate good qualities from evil in the same person.

I conceived an irresistible wish to bring, if possible, Dr Johnson and Mr Wilkes together. How to manage it was a nice and difficult matter.

My worthy booksellers and friends, Messieurs Dilly in the Poultry, at whose hospitable and well-covered table I have seen a greater number of literary men than at any other except that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, had invited me to meet Mr Wilkes and some other gentlemen on Wednesday, May 15. "Pray," said I, "let us have Dr Johnson."

"What! with Mr Wilkes? Not for the world," said Mr Edward Dilly; "Dr Johnson would never forgive me."

"Come," said I, "if you let me negotiate for you, I will be answerable that all shall go well."

Dilly. "Nay, if you will take it upon you, I am sure I shall be very happy to see them both here."

## JOHNSON AND WILKES

Notwithstanding the high veneration which I entertained for Dr Johnson, I was sensible that he was sometimes a little actuated by the spirit of contradiction, and by means of that I hoped I should gain my point. I was persuaded that if I had come upon him with a direct proposal—"Sir, will you dine with Jack Wilkes?" he would have flown into a passion, and would probably have answered—"Dine with Jack Wilkes? Sir, I'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch!" I, therefore, while we were sitting quietly by ourselves at his house in an evening, took occasion to open my plan thus "Mr Dilly, sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honour to dine with him on Wednesday next along with me, as I must soon go to Scotland."

*Johnson* "Sir, I am obliged to Mr Dilly. I will wait upon him."

*Boswell* "Provided, sir, I suppose, that the company which he is to have is agreeable to you?"

*Johnson*. "What do you mean, sir? What do you take me for? Do you think that I am so ignorant of the world as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?"

*Boswell*. "I beg your pardon, sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like. Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his patriotic friends with him."

*Johnson*. "Well, sir, and what then? What care I for his 'patriotic friends'? Poh!"

*Boswell* "I should not be surprised to find Jack Wilkes there."

*Johnson*. "And if Jack Wilkes should be there, what is that to me, sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be angry with you, but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could not meet any company whatever occasionally."

*Boswell* "Pray forgive me, sir; I meant well. But you shall meet whoever comes, for me."

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Thus I secured him, and told Dilly that he would find him very well pleased to be one of his guests on the day appointed.

Upon the much-expected Wednesday I called on him about half an hour before dinner, as I often did when we were to dine out together, to see that he was ready in time, and to accompany him. I found him buffeting his books, covered with dust, and making no preparation for going abroad. "How is this, sir?" said I, "don't you recollect that you are to dine at Mr Dilly's?"

*Johnson* "Sir, I did not think of going to Dilly's; it went out of my head. I have ordered dinner at home with Mrs Williams."

*Boswell* "But, my dear sir, you know you were engaged to Mr Dilly, and I told him so. He will expect you, and will be much disappointed if you don't come."

*Johnson* "You must talk to Mrs Williams about this."

Here was a sad dilemma. I feared that what I was so confident I had secured would yet be frustrated. He had accustomed himself to show Mrs Williams such a degree of humane attention as frequently imposed some restraint upon him, and I knew that if she should be obstinate he would not stir. I hastened down-stairs to the blind lady's room, and told her I was in great uneasiness, for Dr Johnson had engaged to me to dine this day at Mr Dilly's, but that he had told me he had forgotten his engagement, and had ordered dinner at home. "Yes, sir," said she, pretty peevishly, "Dr Johnson is to dine at home."

"Madam," said I, "his respect for you is such that I know he will not leave you unless you absolutely desire it. But, as you have so much of his company, I hope you will be good enough to forgo it for a day; as Mr Dilly is a very worthy man, has frequently had agreeable parties at his house for Dr Johnson, and will be vexed if the doctor neglects him to-day. And then, madam, be pleased to consider my situation. I carried the message, and I assured Mr Dilly that Dr Johnson was to come, and no doubt he

## JOHNSON AND WILKES

has made a dinner, and invited a company, and boasted of the honour he expected to have I shall be quite disgraced if the doctor is not there ”

She gradually softened to my solicitations, and was graciously pleased to empower me to tell Dr Johnson “ that, all things considered, she thought he should certainly go ” I flew back to him, still in dust, and careless of what should be the event,

Indifferent in his choice to go or stay ,

but as soon as I had announced to him Mrs Williams’s consent, he roared—“ Frank, a clean shirt ! ” and was very soon dressed When I had him fairly seated in a hackney-coach with me, I exulted as much as a fortune-hunter who has got an heiress into a post-chaise with him to set out for Gretna Green

When we entered Mr Dilly’s drawing-room, he found himself in the midst of a company he did not know I kept myself snug and silent, watching how he would conduct himself I observed him whispering to Mr Dilly, “ Who is that gentleman, sir ? ”

“ Mr Arthur Lee ”

*Johnson* “ Too—too—too ” (under his breath), which was one of his habitual mutterings Mr Arthur Lee could not but be very obnoxious to Johnson, for he was not only a “ patriot ” but an “ American ” He was afterwards minister from the United States at the Court of Madrid “ And who is the gentleman in lace ? ”

“ Mr Wilkes, sir ”

This information confounded him still more He had some difficulty to restrain himself, and, taking up a book, sat down upon a window-seat, and read, or at least kept his eye intently upon it for some time, till he composed himself. His feelings, I dare say, were awkward enough. But he no doubt recollected having rated me for supposing that he could be at all disconcerted by any company, and he therefore resolutely set himself to behave quite as an easy man of the world, who could adapt himself at once to

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

the disposition and manners of those whom he might chance to meet.

The cheering sound of "Dinner is upon the table" dissolved his reverie, and we all sat down without any symptom of ill-humour. There were present, besides Mr Wilkes, and Mr Arthur Lee—who was an old companion of mine when he studied physic at Edinburgh—Mr (now Sir John) Miller, Dr Lettsom, and Mr Slater the druggist. Mr Wilkes placed himself next to Dr Johnson, and behaved to him with so much attention and politeness that he gained upon him insensibly. No man ate more heartily than Johnson, or loved better what was nice and delicate. Mr Wilkes was very assiduous in helping him to some fine veal. "Pray, give me leave, sir"—"It is better here"—"A little of the brown"—"Some fat, sir"—"A little of the stuffing"—"Some gravy"—"Let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter"—"Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange, or the lemon perhaps may have more zest."

"Sir, sir, I am obliged to you, sir," cried Johnson, bowing, and turning his head to him with a look, for some time, of surly virtue, but, in a short while, of complacency.

Foote being mentioned, Johnson said, "He is not a good mimic." One of the company added, "A merry Andrew, a buffoon!"

*Johnson* "But he has wit, too, and is not deficient in ideas, or in fertility and variety of imagery, and not empty of reading, he has knowledge enough to fill up his part. One species of wit he has in an eminent degree—that of escape. You drive him into a corner with both hands; but he's gone, sir, when you think you have got him—like an animal that jumps over your head. Then he has a great range for wit, he never lets truth stand between him and a jest, and he is sometimes mighty coarse. Garrick is under many restraints from which Foote is free."

*Wilkes* "Garrick's wit is more like Lord Chesterfield's."

*Johnson*. "The first time I was in company with Foote

## JOHNSON AND WILKES

was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased; and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him; but the dog was so very comical that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back upon my chair, and fairly laugh it out. No, sir, he was irresistible. He upon one occasion experienced, in an extraordinary degree, the efficacy of his powers of entertaining. Amongst the many and various modes which he tried of getting money, he became a partner with a small-beer brewer, and he was to have a share of the profits for procuring customers amongst his numerous acquaintance. Fitzherbert was one who took his small-beer, but it was so bad that the servants resolved not to drink it. They were at some loss how to notify their resolution, being afraid of offending their master, who they knew liked Foote much as a companion. At last they fixed upon a little black boy, who was rather a favourite, to be their deputy, and deliver their remonstrance, and, having invested him with the whole authority of the kitchen, he was to inform Mr Fitzherbert, in all their names, upon a certain day, that they would drink Foote's small-beer no longer. On that day Foote happened to dine at Fitzherbert's, and this boy served at table. he was so delighted with Foote's stories, and merriment, and grimace, that when he went down-stairs he told them, 'This is the finest man I have ever seen. I will not deliver your message. I will drink his small-beer.' "

## EXERCISES

1. *Vocabulary* Practise yourself in the use of the following words

asperity; veneration, frustrated, humorous, obstinate; peevishly, solicitous, habitual, obnoxious, disconcerted; disposition, insensibly, fertility, irresistibly, deputy.

2. *Meanings.* Explain the following.

(a) I'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch

(b) She gradually softened to my solicitations

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

(c) A fortune-hunter who has got an heiress into a post-chaise with him to set out for Gretna Green.

(d) A merry Andrew, a buffoon

3 *Interpretation* From this extract, write down what you have learnt of the character of Dr Johnson

4 *Composition* Describe an imaginary interview between two strongly contrasted people, either in history or fiction, such as Napoleon and Wellington, or Shylock and Portia

## R F SCOTT

### *Journal*

SIR ROBERT FALCON SCOTT (1868-1912) was one of the greatest of Antarctic explorers. A naval officer, he led his first expedition in 1901, and did much valuable work in opening up the Antarctic continent. In 1910 he returned to extend this work and, if possible, to reach the South Pole. With four companions—Dr Wilson, Captain Oates, Lieutenant Bowers, and Petty Officer Evans—he reached the Pole in January, 1912, only to find that the Norwegian explorer Amundsen had been three weeks before. On the way back to their base the five explorers gradually weakened under the terrible conditions, and finally all perished.

Our extract describes the last stages of this tragic but glorious journey. They reached the Pole on January 17, and next day they began the long march of eight hundred miles homeward. At first their way led over the high plateau that surrounds the Pole. Thence they descended the Beardmore Glacier to the barrier ice, along which lay the straight road home. At the foot of the Beardmore Glacier, on February 17, Evans died. The four survivors—a weakened party, as Scott calls them—are fighting along, their weakness increasing, as is also the terrible cold of the Antarctic autumn.



## THE LAST MARCH

### I

**M**ONDAY, February 19 —R 33 Temp  $-17^{\circ}$  We have struggled out 46 miles in a short day over a really terrible surface—it has been like pulling over desert sand, without the least glide in the world. If this goes on we shall have a bad time, but I sincerely trust it is only the result of the windless area close to the coast and that, as we are making steadily outwards, we shall shortly escape it. It is perhaps premature to be anxious about covering distance. In all other respects things are improving. We have our sleeping-bags spread on the sledge and they are drying, but, above all, we have our full measure of food again. To-night we had a sort of stew fry of pemmican and horseflesh, and voted it the best hoosh we had ever had on a sledge journey. The absence of poor Evans is a help to the commissariat, but if he had been here in a fit state we might have got along faster. I wonder what is in store for us, with some little alarm at the lateness of the season.

*[Here follows a depressing record of a monotonous fortnight's progress]*

Friday, March 2 —Lunch. Misfortunes rarely come singly. We marched to the [Middle Barrier] depôt fairly easily yesterday afternoon, and since that have suffered three distinct blows which have placed us in a bad position. First we found a shortage of oil, with most rigid economy it can scarce carry us to the next depôt on this surface [71 miles away]. Second, Titus Oates disclosed his feet, the toes showing very bad indeed, evidently bitten by the

## THE LAST MARCH

late temperatures The third blow came in the night, when the wind, which we had hailed with some joy, brought dark overcast weather It fell below  $-40^{\circ}$  in the night, and this morning it took  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours to get our foot-gear on, but we got away before eight We lost cairn and tracks together and made as steady as we could N by W, but have seen nothing Worse was to come—the surface is simply awful In spite of strong wind and full sail we have only done  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles We are in a *very* queer street, since there is no doubt we cannot do the extra marches and feel the cold horribly

*Sunday, March 4* —Lunch Things looking *very* black indeed. As usual we forgot our trouble last night, got into our bags, slept splendidly on good hoosh, woke and had another, and started marching Sun shining brightly, tracks clear, but surface covered with sandy frost-rime All the morning we had to pull with all our strength, and in  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours we covered  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles Last night it was overcast and thick, surface bad, this morning sun shining and surface as bad as ever Under the immediate surface crystals is a hard sastrugi surface, which must have been excellent for pulling a week or two ago We are about 42 miles from the next depôt and have a week's food, but only about 3 to 4 days' fuel—we are as economical of the latter as one can possibly be, and we cannot afford to save food and pull as we are pulling We are in a very tight place indeed, but none of us despondent *yet*, or at least we preserve every semblance of good cheer, but one's heart sinks as the sledge stops dead at some sastrugi behind which the surface sand lies thickly heaped For the moment the temperature is in the  $-20^{\circ}$ —an improvement which makes us much more comfortable, but a colder snap is bound to come again soon. I fear that Oates at least will weather such an event very poorly Providence to our aid! We can expect little from man now except the possibility of extra food at the next depôt. It will be real bad if we get there and find the same shortage of oil. Shall we get there? Such a short distance it would have

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

appeared to us on the summit! I don't know what I should do if Wilson and Bowers weren't so determinedly cheerful over things.

*Monday, March 5*—Lunch Regret to say going from bad to worse We got a slant of wind yesterday afternoon, and going on 5 hours we converted our wretched morning run of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles into something over 9 We went to bed on a cup of cocoa and pemmican solid with the chill off. (R 47) The result is telling on all, but mainly on Oates, whose feet are in a wretched condition One swelled up tremendously last night and he is very lame this morning We started march on tea and pemmican as last night—we pretend to prefer the pemmican this way Marched for 5 hours this morning over a slightly better surface covered with high moundy sastrugi Sledge capsized twice, we pulled on foot, covering about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles We are two pony marches and 4 miles about from our depôt. Our fuel dreadfully low and the poor Soldier nearly done It is pathetic enough because we can do nothing for him, more hot food might do a little, but only a little, I fear We none of us expected these terribly low temperatures, and of the rest of us Wilson is feeling them most, mainly, I fear, from his self-sacrificing devotion in doctoring Oates' feet We cannot help each other, each has enough to do to take care of himself We get cold on the march when the trudging is heavy, and the wind pierces our worn garments The others, all of them, are unendingly cheerful when in the tent We mean to see the game through with a proper spirit, but it's tough work to be pulling harder than we ever pulled in our lives for long hours, and to feel that the progress is so slow. One can only say "God help us!" and plod on our weary way, cold and very miserable, though outwardly cheerful We talk of all sorts of subjects in the tent, not much of food now, since we decided to take the risk of running a full ration We simply couldn't go hungry at this time

*Wednesday, March 7*—A little worse, I fear One of Oates' feet *very* bad this morning, he is wonderfully

## THE LAST MARCH

brave We still talk of what we will do together at home.

We only made  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles yesterday This morning in  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours we did just over 4 miles. We are 16 from our depôt. If we only find the correct proportion of food there and this surface continues, we may get to the next depôt [Mt Hooper, 72 miles farther] but not to One Ton Camp We hope against hope that the dogs have been to Mt Hooper, then we might pull through. If there is a shortage of oil again we can have little hope One feels that for poor Oates the crisis is near, but none of us are improving, though we are wonderfully fit considering the really excessive work we are doing We are only kept going by good food No wind this morning till a chill northerly air came ahead Sun bright and cairns showing up well I should like to keep the track to the end

*Thursday, March 8*—Lunch Worse and worse in morning, poor Oates' left foot can never last out, and time over foot-gear something awful Have to wait in night foot-gear for nearly an hour before I started changing, and then am generally first to be ready Wilson's feet giving trouble now We did  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles this morning and are now  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the depôt—a ridiculously small distance to feel in difficulties, yet on this surface we know we cannot equal half our old marches, and that for that effort we expend nearly double the energy The great question is, What shall we find at the depôt? If the dogs have visited it we may get along a good distance, but if there is another short allowance of fuel, God help us indeed We are in a very bad way, I fear, in any case

*Saturday, March 10*—Things steadily downhill Oates' foot worse He has rare pluck and must know that he can never get through He asked Wilson if he had a chance this morning, and of course Bill had to say he didn't know. In point of fact he has none Apart from him, if he went under now, I doubt whether we could get through With great care we might have a dog's chance, but no more. The weather conditions are awful, and our gear

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gets steadily more icy and difficult to manage. At the same time, of course, poor Titus is the greatest handicap. He keeps us waiting in the morning until we have partly lost the warming effect of our good breakfast, when the only wise policy is to be up and away at once, again at lunch. Poor chap! it is too pathetic to watch him; one cannot but try to cheer him up.

Yesterday we marched up the *dépôt*, Mt Hooper. Cold comfort. Shortage on our allowance all round.

This morning it was calm when we breakfasted, but the wind came from the W N W as we broke camp. It rapidly grew in strength. After travelling for half an hour I saw that none of us could go on facing such conditions. We were forced to camp and are spending the rest of the day in a comfortless blizzard camp, wind quite foul.

### II

*Sunday, March 11* —Titus Oates is very near the end, one feels. What we or he will do, God only knows. We discussed the matter after breakfast, he is a brave fine fellow and understands the situation, but he practically asked for advice. Nothing could be said but to urge him to march as long as he could. One satisfactory result to the discussion, I practically ordered Wilson to hand over the means of ending our troubles to us, so that any one of us may know how to do so. Wilson had no choice between doing so and our ransacking the medicine case. We have 30 opium tabloids apiece and he is left with a tube of morphine. So far the tragical side of our story.

The sky was completely overcast when we started this morning. We could see nothing, lost the tracks, and doubtless have been swaying a good deal since—31 miles for the forenoon—terribly heavy dragging—expected it. Know that 6 miles is about the limit of our endurance now, if we get no help from wind or surfaces. We have 7 days' food and should be about 55 miles from One Ton Camp to-night,  $6 \times 7 = 42$ , leaving us 13 miles short of our

## THE LAST MARCH

distance, even if things get no worse. Meanwhile the season rapidly advances.

*Monday, March 12.*—We did 69 miles yesterday, under our necessary average. Things are left much the same, Oates not pulling much, and now with hands as well as feet pretty well useless. We did 4 miles this morning in 4 hours 20 min—we may hope for 3 this afternoon,  $7 \times 6 = 42$ . We shall be 47 miles from the depôt. I doubt if we can possibly do it. The surface remains awful, the cold intense, and our physical condition running down. God help us! Not a breath of favourable wind for more than a week, and apparently [we are] liable to head winds at any moment.

*Wednesday, March 14.*—No doubt about the going downhill, but everything going wrong for us. Yesterday we woke to a strong northerly wind with temp  $-37^{\circ}$ . Couldn't face it, so remained in camp till 2, then did  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles. Wanted to march later, but party feeling the cold badly as the breeze (N) never took off entirely, and as the sun sank the temp fell. Long time getting supper in dark.

This morning started with southerly breeze, set sail and passed another cairn at good speed, half-way, however, the wind shifted to W by S or W S W, blew through our wind clothes and into our mits. Poor Wilson horribly cold, could [not] get off ski for some time. Bowers and I practically made camp, and when we got into the tent at last we were all deadly cold. Then temp now midday down  $-43^{\circ}$  and the wind strong. We *must* go on, but now the making of every camp must be more difficult and dangerous. It must be near the end, but a pretty merciful end. Poor Oates got it again in the foot. I shudder to think what it will be like to-morrow. It is only with greatest pains rest of us keep off frostbites. No idea there could be temperatures like this at this time of year with such winds. Truly awful outside the tent. Must fight it out to the last biscuit, but can't reduce rations.

*Friday, March 16, or Saturday 17.*—Lost track of dates,

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but think the last correct. Tragedy all along the line. At lunch, the day before yesterday, poor Titus Oates said he couldn't go on, he proposed we should leave him in his sleeping-bag That we could not do, and we induced him to come on, on the afternoon march In spite of its awful nature for him he struggled on and we made a few miles. At night he was worse and we knew the end had come

Should this be found I want these facts recorded Oates' last thoughts were of his mother, but immediately before he took pride in thinking that his regiment would be pleased with the bold way in which he met his death We can testify to his bravery He has borne intense suffering for weeks without complaint, and to the very last was able and willing to discuss outside subjects He did not—would not—give up hope till the very end He was a brave soul. This was the end He slept through the night before last, hoping not to wake, but he woke in the morning—yesterday It was blowing a blizzard He said, "I am just going outside and may be some time." He went out into the blizzard and we have not seen him since

I take this opportunity of saying that we have stuck to our sick companions to the last In case of Edgar Evans, when absolutely out of food and he lay insensible, the safety of the remainder seemed to demand his abandonment, but Providence mercifully removed him at this critical moment He died a natural death, and we did not leave him till two hours after his death We knew that poor Oates was walking to his death, but though we tried to dissuade him, we knew it was the act of a brave man and an English gentleman We all hope to meet the end with a similar spirit, and assuredly the end is not far

I can only write at lunch and then only occasionally The cold is intense,  $-40^{\circ}$  at midday. My companions are unendingly cheerful, but we are all on the verge of serious frostbites, and though we constantly talk of fetching through, I don't think any one of us believes it in his heart

We are cold on the march now, and at all times except meals. Yesterday we had to lie up for a blizzard and to-

## THE LAST MARCH

day we move dreadfully slowly. We are at No. 14 pony camp, only two pony marches from One Ton Dépôt. We leave here our theodolite, a camera, and Oates' sleeping-bags. Diaries, etc., and geological specimens carried at Wilson's special request, will be found with us or on our sledge

*Sunday, March 18*—To-day, lunch, we are 21 miles from the dépôt. Ill-fortune presses, but better may come. We have had more wind and drift from ahead yesterday; had to stop marching, wind N W, force 4, temp  $-35^{\circ}$ . No human being could face it, and we are worn out *nearly*.

My right foot has gone, nearly all the toes—two days ago I was proud possessor of best feet. These are the steps of my downfall. Like an ass I mixed a small spoonful of curry powder with my melted pemmican—it gave me violent indigestion. I lay awake and in pain all night, woke and felt done on the march, foot went and I didn't know it. A very small measure of neglect and I have a foot which is not pleasant to contemplate. Bowers takes first place in condition, but there is not much to choose after all. The others are still confident of getting through—or pretend to be—I don't know! We have the last *half* fill of oil in our primus and a very small quantity of spirit—this alone between us and thirst. The wind is fair for the moment, and that is perhaps a fact to help. The mileage would have seemed ridiculously small on our outward journey.

*Monday, March 19*—Lunch. We camped with difficulty last night and were dreadfully cold till after our supper of cold pemmican and biscuit and a half a pannikin of cocoa cooked over the spirit. Then, contrary to expectation, we got warm and all slept well. To-day we started in the usual dragging manner. Sledge dreadfully heavy. We are  $15\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the dépôt and ought to get there in three days. What progress! We have two days' food, but barely a day's fuel. All our feet are getting bad—Wilson's best, my right foot worse, left all right. There is no chance to nurse one's feet till we can get hot food into



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us. Amputation is the least I can hope for now, but will the trouble spread? That is the serious question. The weather doesn't give us a chance—the wind from N. to N.W. and  $-40^{\circ}$  temp. to-day.

*Wednesday, March 21*—Got within 11 miles of dépôt Monday night, had to lie up all yesterday in severe blizzard. To-day forlorn hope, Wilson and Bowers going to dépôt for fuel.

22 and 23—Blizzard bad as ever—Wilson and Bowers unable to start—to-morrow last chance—no fuel and only one or two <sup>1</sup> of food left—must be near the end. Have decided it shall be natural—we shall march for the dépôt with or without our effects and die in our tracks

[*Thursday*] *March 29.*—Since the 21st we have had a continuous gale from W S W and S W We had fuel to make two cups of tea apiece and bare food for two days on the 20th Every day we have been ready to start for our dépôt 11 miles away, but outside the door of the tent it remains a scene of whirling drift I do not think we can hope for any better things now We shall stick it out to the end, but we are getting weaker, of course, and the end cannot be far

It seems a pity, but I do not think I can write more

R SCOTT

Last entry.

For God's sake look after our people

<sup>1</sup> Word missing evidently ' rations '

## CHARLES LAMB

### *The Last Essays of Elia*

CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834) was a man of an oddly humorous nature, which was itself a reflection of a deeper strain of an inherited weakness of mind. He was a clerk, first in the South Sea House, and latterly in the East India House. In his scanty leisure time he began to write his *Essays of Elia*, which first appeared in the *London Magazine*.

As an English essayist Lamb stands supreme. He writes about all manner of subjects, which in the end nearly all come round to himself. He does this, however, in such a quaintly humorous manner that the reader is usually well pleased with the result.

The following essay is from his second volume, which he called *Last Essays of Elia* (1833). This essay possesses a peculiar interest, not only because it records Lamb's final severance from his life-long profession, but also because it reveals the fact that, almost unknown to himself, his mind was weakening under the strain.

## COMING HOME FOR EVER<sup>1</sup>

IT is now six-and-thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing Lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant playtime, and the frequently intervening vacations of schooldays, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours a day attendance at the counting-house. But time partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content—doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself, but Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending and recreation. In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad-singers—the buzz and stirring murmur of the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a week-day saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful—are shut out. No book-stalls deliciously to idle over—no busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by—the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it. Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances—or half-happy at best—of emancipated 'prentices and little tradesfolks, with here and there a servant-maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour; and lively expressing the hollowness of a day's pleasur-

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ing The very strollers in the fields on that day look anything but comfortable

But besides Sundays, I had a day at Easter, and a day at Christmas, with a full week in the summer to go and air myself in my native fields of Hertfordshire This last was a great indulgence, and the prospect of its recurrence, I believe, alone kept me up through the year, and made my durance tolerable But when the week came round, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me? or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days, spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where the promised rest? Before I had a taste of it, it was vanished I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have sustained my thralldom

Independently of the rigours of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree, that it was visible in all the lines of my countenance My health and my good spirits flagged I had perpetually a dread of some crisis, to which I should be found unequal Besides my daylight servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep, and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like I was fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would sometimes rally me upon the trouble legible in my countenance, but I did not know that it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when, on the fifth of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L——, the junior partner in the firm,

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calling me on one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and frankly inquired the cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words of course to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained labouring under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure, that I had foolishly given a handle against myself, and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner, the most anxious one, I verily believe, in my whole life, when on the evening of the 12th of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about eight o'clock), I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlour. I thought now my time is surely come, I have done for myself, I am going to be told that they have no longer occasion for me. L——, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me—when to my utter astonishment B——, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!), and asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary—a magnificent offer! I do not know what I answered between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home—for ever. This noble benefit—gratitude forbids me to conceal their names—I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the

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world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet, & Lacy.

*Esto perpetua!*

For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity, I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastille, suddenly let loose after a forty-years' confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have his Time all to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions, I wanted some steward, or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forgo their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient, and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. If Time hung heavy upon me, I could walk it away, but I do *not* walk all day long, as I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If Time were troublesome I could read it away; but I do *not* read in that violent measure, with which, having no Time my own but candle-light Time, I used to weary out my head and eyesight in bygone winters. I walk, read, or scribble (as now), just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure, I let it come to me. I am like the man

that's born, and has his years come to him,  
In some green desert

“Years!” you will say, “what is this superannuated

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simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us he is past fifty."

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For *that* is the only true Time, which a man can properly call his own, that which he has all to himself, the rest, though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's Time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for me threefold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

A fortnight has passed since the date of my first communication. At that period I was approaching to tranquillity, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left, an unsettling sense of novelty, the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my apparel. I was a poor Carthusian, from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution returned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. It is natural to me to go where I please, to do what I please. I find myself at eleven o'clock in the day in Bond Street, and it seems to me that I have been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho, to explore a book-stall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in the morning. Was it ever otherwise? What is become of Fish Street Hill? Where is Fenchurch Street? Stones of old Mincing Lane, which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six-and-thirty years, to the footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal? I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall. It is 'Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles. It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in my condition to a passing into another world. Time stands still in a

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manner to me I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week or of the month Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post days, in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday nights' sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, etc The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to follow, sat as a load upon my poor Sabbath recreations What charm has washed that Ethiop white? What is gone of Black Monday? All days are the same Sunday itself—that unfortunate failure of a holiday, as it too often proved, what with my sense of its fugitiveness, and over-care to get the greatest quantity of pleasure out of it—is melted down into a week-day I can spare to go to church, without grudging the huge candle which it used to seem to cut out of the holiday I have time for everything I can visit a sick friend I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest I can insult over him with an invitation to take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May morning It is Lucretian pleasure to behold the poor drudges, whom I have left behind in the world, carking and caring, like horses in a mill, drudging on in the same eternal round—and what is it all for? A man can never have too much Time to himself, nor too little to do Had I a little son, I would christen him NOTHING-TO-DO, he should do nothing Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative I am altogether for the life contemplative Will no kindly earthquake come and swallow up those accursed cotton-mills? Take me that lumber of a desk there, and bowl it down

As low as to the fiends

I am no longer ———, clerk to the Firm of, etc I am Retired Leisure. I am to be met with in trim gardens I am already come to be known by my vacant face and careless gesture, perambulating at no fixed pace, nor with



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any settled purpose I walk about; not to and from. They tell me, a certain *cum dignitate* air, that has been buried so long with my other good parts, has begun to shoot forth in my person. I grow into gentility perceptibly When I take up a newspaper, it is to read the state of the opera *Opus operatum est* I have done all that I came into this world to do. I have worked task-work, and have the rest of the day to myself

### EXERCISES

1 *Vocabulary* Lamb's vocabulary was wide and varied, with a slightly archaic flavour These features can be seen in the following list of his words Use these in sentences of your own composition

transition, recurrence, durance, phantom, snatch, illumination, thralldom, rigours, incapacity, crisis, servitude, imaginary, emancipation, legible, taxed, infirmity, awful, formidable, meritorious, expediency, munificent, felicity, giddy, transient, tranquillity, hyperbole, cantle

2 *Meanings* A certain oddity of phrase is another peculiarity of Lamb's style Express the following in simpler style

(a) The prospect of its recurrence made my durance tolerable

(b) The wood had entered into my soul

(c) He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life

(d) I stammered out a bow

(e) I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastille

(f) To the footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal?

(g) I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall

(h) What charm has washed that Ethiop white?

(i) It is Lucretian pleasure to behold the poor drudges

3 *Interpretation*

(a) Take the paragraph beginning, "It is true I had" (p. 148).

(i) Rewrite it in shorter sentences and much more simply

(ii) Give a title to your paragraph

(iii) Write down two or three of what you think are Lamb's peculiar phrases

(b) "My next ten years will be as long as any preceding thirty." Show how Lamb works this out.

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4. *Composition.* Write an essay on ·
- (a) Modern Office-life (compared with the earlier kind).
  - (b) A Walk through a Large City
  - (c) How to spend Your Leisure-time

## SIR WALTER SCOTT

### *The Talisman*

SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771-1832), who was born in Edinburgh, was trained as a lawyer and became a sheriff. His chief interests were literary and antiquarian. His first literary work was poetical, for example, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) and *Marmion* (1808). In 1814 he wrote *Waverley*, and so gave rise to the wonderful series called the Waverley Novels.

The following passage is from *The Talisman* (1825), a tale of the Third Crusade. The hero of the story is a disguised Scottish knight, who calls himself Sir Kenneth, but who is really the Earl of Huntingdon, a member of the Scottish royal family. By a series of mischances Sir Kenneth falls into disgrace and is dismissed from the service of King Richard. However, he returns in the disguise of a Nubian, or negro slave, and the extract shows how he restores himself to Richard's favour.

## THE NUBIAN

**R**ICHARD surveyed the Nubian in silence as he stood before him, his looks bent upon the ground, his arms folded on his bosom, with the appearance of a black marble statue of the most exquisite workmanship, waiting life from the touch of a Prometheus. The King of England, who, as it was emphatically said of his successor Henry VIII, loved to look upon A MAN, was well pleased with the thews, sinews, and symmetry of him whom he now surveyed, and questioned him in the *lingua franca*, "Art thou a pagan?"

The slave shook his head, and, raising his finger to his brow, crossed himself in token of his Christianity, then resumed his posture of motionless humility.

"A Nubian Christian, doubtless," said Richard, "and mutilated of the organ of speech by these heathen dogs?"

The mute again slowly shook his head, in token of negative, pointed with his forefinger to heaven, and then laid it upon his own lips.

"I understand thee," said Richard, "thou dost suffer under the infliction of God, not by the cruelty of man. Canst thou clean an armour and belt, and buckle it in time of need?"

The mute nodded, and stepping towards the coat of mail, which hung, with the shield and helmet of the chivalrous monarch, upon the pillar of the tent, he handled it with such nicety of address, as sufficiently to show that he fully understood the business of the armour-bearer.

"Thou art an apt, and wilt doubtless be a useful knave. Thou shalt wait in my chamber, and on my person," said the King, "to show how much I value the gift of the royal

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Soldan. If thou hast no tongue, it follows thou canst carry no tales, neither provoke me to be sudden by any unfit reply "

The Nubian again prostrated himself till his brow touched the earth, then stood erect, at some paces distant, as waiting for his new master's commands

"Nay, thou shalt commence thy office presently," said Richard, "for I see a speck of rust darkening on that shield, and when I shake it in the face of Saladin, it should be bright and unsullied as the Soldan's honour and mine own "

A horn was winded without, and presently Sir Henry Neville entered with a packet of despatches "From England, my lord," he said, as he delivered it

"From England—our own England!" repeated Richard in a tone of melancholy enthusiasm "Alas! they little think how hard their sovereign has been beset by sickness and sorrow, faint friends, and forward enemies" Then, opening the despatches, he said hastily, "Ha! this comes from no peaceful land they too have their feuds Neville, begone: I must peruse these tidings alone, and at leisure "

Neville withdrew accordingly, and Richard was soon absorbed in the melancholy details which had been conveyed to him from England, concerning the factions that were tearing to pieces his native dominions—the disunion of his brothers, John and Geoffrey, and the quarrels of both with the High Justiciary Longchamp, Bishop of Ely; the oppressions practised by the nobles upon the peasantry, and rebellion of the latter against their masters, which had produced everywhere scenes of discord, and in some instances the effusion of blood Details of incidents mortifying to his pride, and derogatory from his authority, were intermingled with the earnest advice of his wisest and most attached counsellors, that he should presently return to England, as his presence offered the only hope of saving the kingdom from all the horrors of civil discord, of which France and Scotland were likely to avail themselves.

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Filled with the most painful anxiety, Richard read, and again read, the ill-omened letters, compared the intelligence which some of them contained with the same facts as differently stated in others, and soon became totally insensible to whatever was passing around him, although seated, for the sake of coolness, close to the entrance of his tent, and having the curtains withdrawn, so that he could see and be seen by the guards and others who were stationed without.

Deeper in the shadow of the pavilion, and busied with the task his new master had imposed, sat the Nubian slave, with his back rather turned towards the King. He had finished adjusting and cleaning the hauberk and brigandine, and was now busily employed on a broad pavesse, or buckler, of unusual size, and covered with steel-plating, which Richard often used in reconnoitring, or actually storming, fortified places, as a more effectual protection against missile weapons than the narrow triangular shield used on horseback.

This pavesse bore neither the royal lions of England, nor any other device, to attract the observation of the defenders of the walls against which it was advanced. The care, therefore, of the armourer was addressed to causing its surface to shine as bright as crystal, in which he seemed to be peculiarly successful. Beyond the Nubian, and scarce visible from without, lay the large dog, which might be termed his brother slave, and which, as if he felt awed by being transferred to a royal owner, was couched close to the side of the mute, with head and ears on the ground, and his limbs and tail drawn close around and under him.

While the monarch and his new attendant were thus occupied, another actor crept upon the scene, and mingled among the group of English yeomen, about a score of whom, respecting the unusually pensive posture and close occupation of their sovereign, were, contrary to their wont, keeping a silent guard in front of his tent. It was not, however, more vigilant than usual. Some were play-

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ing at games of hazard with small pebbles, others spoke together in whispers of the approaching day of battle, and several lay asleep, their bulky limbs folded in their green mantles

Amid these careless warders glided the puny form of a little old Turk, poorly dressed like a marabout or santon of the desert—a sort of enthusiasts, who sometimes ventured into the camp of the Crusaders, though treated always with contumely, and often with violence. Indeed, the luxury and profligate indulgence of the Christian leaders had occasioned a motley concourse in their tents, of musicians, Jewish merchants, Copts, Turks, and all the varied refuse of the Eastern nations, so that the caftan and turban—though to drive both from the Holy Land was the professed object of the expedition—were nevertheless neither an uncommon nor an alarming sight in the camp of the Crusaders. When, however, the little insignificant figure we have described approached so nigh as to receive some interruption from the warders, he dashed his dusky green turban from his head, showed that his beard and eyebrows were shaved like those of a professed buffoon, and that the expression of his fantastic and writhen features, as well as of his little black eyes, which glittered like jet, was that of a crazed imagination.

“Dance, marabout,” cried the soldiers, acquainted with the manners of these wandering enthusiasts—“dance, or we will scourge thee with our bow-strings, till thou spin as never top did under schoolboy’s lash.” Thus shouted the reckless warders, as much delighted at having a subject to tease, as a child when he catches a butterfly, or a schoolboy on discovering a bird’s nest.

The marabout, as if happy to do their behests, bounded from the earth, and spun his giddy round before them with singular agility, which, when contrasted with his slight and wasted figure and diminutive appearance, made him resemble a withered leaf twirled round and around at the pleasure of the winter’s breeze. His single lock of hair streamed upwards from his bald and shaven head, as

## THE NUBIAN

if some genie upheld him by it; and indeed it seemed as if supernatural art were necessary to the execution of the wild whirling dance, in which scarce the tiptoe of the performer was seen to touch the ground

Amid the vagaries of his performance, he flew here and there, from one spot to another, still approaching, however, though almost imperceptibly, to the entrance of the royal tent, so that, when at length he sunk exhausted on the earth, after two or three bounds still higher than those which he had yet executed, he was not above thirty yards from the King's person

For the space of a quarter of an hour, or longer, after the incident related, all remained perfectly quiet in the front of the royal habitation. The King read and mused in the entrance of his pavilion, behind, and with his back turned to the same entrance, the Nubian slave still burnished the ample pavesse, in front of all, at an hundred paces distant, the yeomen of the guard stood, sat, or lay extended on the grass, attentive to their own sports, but pursuing them in silence, while on the esplanade betwixt them and the front of the tent, lay, scarcely to be distinguished from a bundle of rags, the senseless form of the marabout

But the Nubian had the advantage of a mirror, from the brilliant reflection which the surface of the highly polished shield now afforded, by means of which he beheld, to his alarm and surprise, that the marabout raised his head, gently from the ground, so as to survey all around him moving with a well-adjusted precaution, which seemed entirely inconsistent with a state of ebriety. He couched his head instantly, as if satisfied he was unobserved, and began, with the slightest possible appearance of voluntary effort, to drag himself, as if by chance, ever nearer and nearer to the King, but stopping and remaining fixed at intervals, like the spider, which, moving towards her object, collapses into apparent lifelessness when she thinks she is the subject of observation. This species of movement appeared suspicious to the Ethiopian, who, on his part, prepared himself as quietly as possible to



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interfere, the instant that interference should seem to be necessary.

The marabout meanwhile glided on gradually and imperceptibly, serpent-like, or rather snail-like, till he was about ten yards' distance from Richard's person, when, starting on his feet, he sprung forward with the bound of a tiger, stood at the King's back in less than an instant, and brandished aloft the cangiar, or poniard, which he had hidden in his sleeve

Not the presence of his whole army could have saved their heroic monarch, but the motions of the Nubian had been as well calculated as those of the enthusiast, and ere the latter could strike, the former caught his uplifted arm. Turning his fanatical wrath upon what thus unexpectedly interposed betwixt him and his object, the assassin, for such was the seeming marabout, dealt the Nubian a blow with the dagger, which, however, only grazed his arm, while the far superior strength of the Ethiopian easily dashed him to the ground

Aware of what had passed, Richard had now arisen, and with little more of surprise, anger, or interest of any kind in his countenance, than an ordinary man would show in brushing off and crushing an intrusive wasp, caught up the stool on which he had been sitting, and exclaiming only, "Ha, dog!" dashed almost to pieces the skull of the assassin, who uttered twice, once in a loud and once in a broken tone, the words "Allah ackbar!" (God is victorious), and expired at the King's feet

## EXERCISES

- 1 *Vocabulary* Here is a selection from Scott's extensive vocabulary Use the words in sentences of your own  
exquisite, symmetry, chivalrous, prostrated, peruse;  
reconnoitring; device, pensive, vigilant, hazard, agility;  
supernatural; imperceptibly, esplanade, voluntary; poniard; fanatical, intrusion, assassin
- 2 *Meanings* Express in simple modern prose
  - (a) Waiting life from the touch of a Prometheus.
  - (b) He resumed his posture of motionless humility.

## THE NUBIAN

- (c) Thou dost suffer under the infliction of God.
- (d) He handled it with such nicety of address
- (e) The King became totally insensible to whatever was passing around him
- (f) The care of the armourer was addressed
- (g) Amid the vagaries of his performance
- (h) A precaution which seemed entirely inconsistent with a state of ebriety

3 *Interpretation* Take the paragraph beginning, "Amid these" (p 160)

- (a) Give the paragraph a title
- (b) Rewrite simply, using shorter sentences
- (c) Analyse all three sentences in the passage
- (d) Explain particularly, *A sort of enthusiasts, the luxury and profligate indulgence of the Christian leaders, and the caftan and the turban*
- (e) Point out any figures of speech

4 *Composition*

- (a) Write an essay on "The Crusades"
- (b) Describe the assassination of a famous man, in history or fiction
- (c) Write leaves from the diary of Kenneth of Scotland.

## CHARLES WATERTON

### *Wanderings in South America*

CHARLES WATERTON (1782-1867), a native of Yorkshire, went as a young man to Demerara, in British Guiana, to manage some estates belonging to his family. After a period of eight years in this business he felt the lure of the almost unexplored continent too keenly, and he began those wanderings in the jungle which henceforth were to be the chief occupation of his life. He was an enthusiastic naturalist, interested in all forms of life, though mainly in that of the higher animals. His best work is recorded in his *Wanderings in South America* (1828).

In our extract he describes the sloth, a curious animal about which very little was really known in those days.

## THE SLOTH

LET us now turn our attention to the sloth, whose native haunts have hitherto been so little known, and probably little looked into. Those who have written on this singular animal have remarked that he is in a perpetual state of pain, that he is proverbially slow in his movements, that he is a prisoner in space, and that as soon as he has consumed all the leaves of the tree upon which he had mounted, he rolls himself up in the form of a ball, and then falls to the ground. This is not the case.

If the naturalists who have written the history of the sloth had gone into the wilds, in order to examine his haunts and economy, they would not have drawn the foregoing conclusions, they would have learned that though all other quadrupeds may be described while resting upon the ground, the sloth is an exception to the rule, and that his history must be written while he is in the tree.

This singular animal is destined by nature to be produced, to live and to die in the trees, and to do justice to him, naturalists must examine him in this his upper element. He is a scarce and solitary animal, and being good food, he is never allowed to escape. He inhabits remote and gloomy forests, where snakes take up their abode, and where cruelly stinging ants and scorpions, and swamps, and innumerable thorny shrubs and bushes, obstruct the steps of civilized man. Were you to draw your own conclusions from the descriptions which you have been given of the sloth, you would probably suspect that no naturalist has actually gone into the wilds with

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the fixed determination to find him out and examine his haunts, and see whether nature has committed any blunder in the formation of this extraordinary creature, which appears to us so forlorn and miserable, so ill put together, and so totally unfit to enjoy the blessings which have been so bountifully given to the rest of animated nature; for, as it has formerly been remarked, he has no soles to his feet, and he is evidently ill at ease when he tries to move on the ground, and it is then he looks up into your face with a countenance that says, "Have pity on me, for I am in pain and sorrow"

It mostly happens that Indians and Negroes are the people who catch the sloth and bring it to the white man. hence it may be conjectured that the erroneous accounts we have hitherto had of the sloth have not been penned down with the slightest intention to mislead the reader, or give him an exaggerated history, but that these errors have naturally arisen by examining the sloth in those places where nature never intended that he should be exhibited

However, we are now in his own domain. Man but little frequents these thick and noble forests, which extend far and wide on every side of us. This, then, is the proper place to go in quest of the sloth. We will first take a near view of him. By obtaining a knowledge of his anatomy, we shall be enabled to account for his movements hereafter, when we see him in his proper haunts. His fore-legs, or, more correctly speaking, his arms, are apparently much too long, while his hind-legs are very short, and look as if they could be bent almost to the shape of a corkscrew. Both the fore- and hind-legs, by their form, and by the manner in which they are joined to the body, are quite incapacitated from acting in a perpendicular direction, or in supporting it on the earth, as the bodies of other quadrupeds are supported, by their legs. Hence, when you place him on the floor, his belly touches the ground. Now, granted that he supported himself on his legs like other animals, nevertheless he

## THE SLOTH

would be in pain, for he has no soles to his feet, and his claws are very sharp and long, and curved ; so that, were his body supported by his feet, it would be by their extremities, just as your body would be, were you to throw yourself on all fours, and try to support it on the ends of your toes and fingers—a trying position. Were the floor of glass, or of a polished surface, the sloth would actually be quite stationary , but as the ground is generally rough, with little protuberances upon it, such as stones, or roots of grass, etc , this just suits the sloth, and he moves his fore-legs in all directions, in order to find something to lay hold of , and when he has succeeded he pulls himself forward, and is thus enabled to travel onwards, but at the same time in so tardy and awkward a manner as to acquire him the name of Sloth.

Indeed, his looks and his gestures evidently betray his uncomfortable situation and as a sigh every now and then escapes him, we may be entitled to conclude that he is actually in pain

Some years ago I kept a sloth in my room for several months I often took him out of the house and placed him upon the ground, in order to have an opportunity of observing his motions If the ground were rough, he would pull himself forwards, by means of his fore-legs, at a pretty good pace ; and he invariably immediately shaped his course towards the nearest tree But if I put him upon a smooth and well-trodden part of the road, he appeared to be in trouble and distress his favourite abode was the back of a chair and after getting all his legs in a line upon the topmost part of it, he would hang there for hours together, and often with a low and inward cry, would seem to invite me to take notice of him

The sloth, in its wild state, spends its whole life in trees, and never leaves them but through force, or by accident. An all-ruling Providence has ordered man to tread on the surface of the earth, the eagle to soar in the expanse of the skies, and the monkey and squirrel to inhabit the trees : still these may change their relative

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

situations without feeling much inconvenience. but the sloth is doomed to spend his whole life in the trees; and, what is more extraordinary, not *upon* the branches, like the squirrel and the monkey, but *under* them. He moves suspended from the branch, he rests suspended from it, and he sleeps suspended from it To enable him to do this, he must have a very different formation from that of any other known quadruped

Hence, his seemingly bungled conformation is at once accounted for, and in lieu of the sloth leading a painful life, and entailing a melancholy and miserable existence on its progeny, it is but fair to surmise that it just enjoys life as much as any other animal, and that its extraordinary formation and singular habits are but further proofs to engage us to admire the wonderful works of Omnipotence

It must be observed, that the sloth does not hang head-downwards like a vampire When asleep, he supports himself from a branch parallel to the earth He first seizes the branch with one arm, and then with the other, and after that, brings up both his legs, one by one, to the same branch, so that all four are in a line he seems perfectly at rest in this position Now, had he a tail, he would be at a loss to know what to do with it in this position were he to draw it up within his legs, it would interfere with them, and were he to let it hang down, it would become the sport of the winds Thus his deficiency of tail is a benefit to him; it is merely an apology for a tail, scarcely exceeding an inch and a half in length

I observed, when he was climbing, he never used his arms both together, but first one and then the other, and so on alternately There is a singularity in his hair, different from that of all other animals, and, I believe, hitherto unnoticed by naturalists, his hair is thick and coarse at the extremity, and gradually tapers to the root, where it becomes fine as a spider's web His fur has so much the hue of the moss which grows on the branches of the trees, that it is very difficult to make him out when he is at rest.

## THE SLOTH

The male of the three-toed sloth has a longitudinal bar of very fine black hair on his back, rather lower than his shoulder-blades; on each side of this black bar there is a space of yellow hair, equally fine; it has the appearance of being pressed into the body, and looks exactly as if it had been singed. If we examine the anatomy of his fore-legs, we shall immediately perceive, by their firm and muscular texture, how very capable they are of supporting the pendent weight of his body, both in climbing and at rest, and, instead of pronouncing them a bungled composition, as a celebrated naturalist has done, we shall consider them as remarkably well calculated to perform their extraordinary functions

As the sloth is an inhabitant of forests within the tropics, where the trees touch each other in the greatest profusion, there seems to be no reason why he should confine himself to one tree alone for food, and entirely strip it of its leaves. During the many years I have ranged the forests I have never seen a tree in such a state of nudity, indeed, I would hazard a conjecture that by the time the animal had finished the last of the old leaves, there would be a new crop on the part of the tree he had stripped first, ready for him to begin again, so quick is the process of vegetation in these countries

There is a saying amongst the Indians that, when the wind blows, the sloth begins to travel. In calm weather he remains tranquil, probably not liking to cling to the brittle extremity of the branches, lest they should break with him in passing from one tree to another, but as soon as the wind rises, the branches of the neighbouring trees become interwoven, and then the sloth seizes hold of them, and pursues his journey in safety. There is seldom an entire day of calm in these forests. The trade-wind generally sets in about ten o'clock in the morning, and thus the sloth may set off after breakfast, and get a considerable way before dinner. He travels at a good round pace; and were you to see him pass from tree to



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tree, as I have done, you would never think of calling him a sloth

One day, as we were crossing the Essequibo, I saw a large two-toed sloth on the ground upon the bank; how he had got there nobody could tell the Indian said he had never surprised a sloth in such a situation before: he would hardly have come there to drink, for both above and below the place the branches of the trees touched the water, and afforded him an easy and safe access to it Be this as it may, though the trees were not above twenty yards from him, he could not make his way through the sand time enough to escape before we landed As soon as we got up to him he threw himself upon his back, and defended himself in gallant style with his fore-legs "Come, poor fellow," said I to him, "if thou hast got into a hobble to-day, thou shalt not suffer for it I'll take no advantage of thee in misfortune; the forest is large enough both for thee and me to rove in, go thy ways up above, and enjoy thyself in these endless wilds, it is more than probable thou wilt never have another interview with man So fare thee well " On saying this, I took a long stick which was lying there, held it for him to hook on, and then conveyed him to a high and stately mora He ascended with wonderful rapidity, and in about a minute he was almost at the top of the tree He now went off in a side direction, and caught hold of the branch of a neighbouring tree, he then proceeded towards the heart of the forest I stood looking on, lost in amazement at his singular mode of progress I followed him with my eye till the intervening branches closed in betwixt us, and then I lost sight for ever of the two-toed sloth I was going to add, that I never saw a sloth take to his heels in such earnest; but the expression will not do, for the sloth has no heels.

## THE SLOTH

### EXERCISES

1. *Vocabulary* In what sense does the author use each of the following words? Make up sentences to show a similar usage  
perpetual, economy, solitary, innumerable, forlorn, erroneous, anatomy, incapacitated, perpendicular, quadrupeds, stationary, protuberances, conformation, Omnipotence, vampire, deficiency, longitudinal, muscular, texture, pendent, functions, trade-wind, singular
2. *Précis* Summarize the account of the sloth and his habits

## GEORGE ELIOT

### *The Mill on the Floss*

GEORGE ELIOT (1819-80) was the name assumed by MARY ANN EVANS, who wrote several outstanding novels during the middle of the nineteenth century. The best of her novels are *Adam Bede* (1859), *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), and *Silas Marner* (1861).

*The Mill on the Floss*, from which we give an impressive passage at the end, is to some extent the story of George Eliot's own life. It describes the life of Maggie Tulliver, a clever, moody, headstrong girl who is little understood by her unimaginative parents. She is very fond of her brother, Tom, but they become estranged. The extract shows how in the end they become united once more.

## AGAIN UNITED

**W**HAT was happening to them at the Mill? The flood had once nearly destroyed it. They might be in danger—in distress—her mother and her brother, alone there, beyond reach of help! Her whole soul was strained now on that thought, and she saw the long-loved faces looking for help into the darkness, and finding none.

She was floating in smooth water now—perhaps far on the over-flooded fields. There was no sense of present danger to check the outgoing of her mind to the old home, and she strained her eyes against the curtain of gloom that she might seize the first sight of her whereabouts—that she might catch some faint suggestion of the spot towards which all her anxieties tended.

O how welcome, the widening of that dismal watery level—the gradual uplifting of the cloudy firmament—the slowly defining blackness of objects above the glassy dark! Yes—she must be out on the fields—those were the tops of hedgerow trees. Which way did the river lie? Looking behind her, she saw the lines of black trees looking before her, there were none. Then, the river lay before her. She seized an oar and began to paddle the boat forward with the energy of wakening hope. The dawning seemed to advance more swiftly, now she was in action, and she could soon see the poor dumb beasts crowding piteously on a mound where they had taken refuge. Onward she paddled and rowed by turns in the growing twilight. Her wet clothes clung round her, and her streaming hair was dashed about by the wind, but she was hardly conscious of any bodily sensations—except a sensation of strength, inspired by mighty emotion.

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Along with the sense of danger and possible rescue for those long-remembered beings at the old home, there was an undefined sense of reconciliation with her brother : what quarrel, what harshness, what unbelief in each other can subsist in the presence of a great calamity, when all the artificial vesture of our life is gone, and we are all one with each other in primitive mortal needs? Vaguely, Maggie felt this—in the strong resurgent love towards her brother that swept away all the later impressions of hard, cruel offence and misunderstanding, and left only the deep, underlying, unshakable memories of early union.

But now there was a large dark mass in the distance, and near to her Maggie could discern the current of the river. The dark mass must be—yes, it was—St Ogg's Ah, now she knew which way to look for the first glimpse of the well-known trees—the grey willows, the now yellowing chestnuts—and above them the old roof! But there was no colour, no shape yet all was faint and dim. More and more strongly the energies seemed to come and put themselves forth, as if her life were a stored-up force that was being spent in this hour, unneeded for any future.

She must get her boat into the current of the Floss, else she would never be able to pass the Ripple and approach the house this was the thought that occurred to her, as she imagined with more and more vividness the state of things round the old home. But then she might be carried very far down, and be unable to guide her boat out of the current again. For the first time distinct ideas of danger began to press upon her, but there was no choice of courses, no room for hesitation, and she floated into the current. Swiftly she went now, without effort; more and more clearly in the lessening distance and the growing light she began to discern the objects that she knew must be the well-known trees and roofs; nay, she was not far off a rushing muddy current that must be the strangely altered Ripple.

Great God! there were floating masses in it, that might

## AGAIN UNITED

dash against her boat as she passed, and cause her to perish too soon. What were those masses?

For the first time Maggie's heart began to beat in an agony of dread. She sat helpless—dimly conscious that she was being floated along—more intensely conscious of the anticipated clash. But the horror was transient. It passed away before the oncoming warehouses of St Ogg's. She had passed the mouth of the Ripple, then—*now*, she must use all her skill and power to manage the boat and get it if possible out of the current. She could see now that the bridge was broken down. She could see the masts of a stranded vessel far out over the watery field. But no boats were to be seen moving on the river—such as had been laid hands on were employed in the flooded streets.

With new resolution, Maggie seized her oar, and stood up again to paddle, but the now ebbing tide added to the swiftness of the river, and she was carried along beyond the bridge. She could hear shouts from the windows overlooking the river, as if the people there were calling to her. It was not till she had passed on nearly to Tofton that she could get the boat clear of the current. Then with one yearning look towards her uncle Deane's house that lay farther down the river, she took to both her oars and rowed with all her might across the watery fields, back towards the Mill. Colour was beginning to awake now, and as she approached the Dorlcote fields, she could discern the tints of the trees—could see the old Scotch firs far to the right, and the home chestnuts—Oh! how deep they lay in the water—deeper than the trees on this side of the hill. And the roof of the Mill—where was it? Those heavy fragments hurrying down the Ripple—what had they meant? But it was not the house—the house stood firm; drowned up to the first story, but still firm—or was it broken in at the end towards the Mill?

With panting joy that she was there at last—joy that overcame all distress—Maggie neared the front of the

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

house At first she heard no sound: she saw no object moving Her boat was on a level with the upstairs windows She called out in a loud piercing voice,

"Tom, where are you? Mother, where are you? Here is Maggie!"

Soon, from the window of the attic in the central gable, she heard Tom's voice

"Who is it? Have you brought a boat?"

"It is I, Tom—Maggie. Where is Mother?"

"She is not here she went to Garum, the day before yesterday. I'll come down to the lower window."

"Alone, Maggie?" said Tom, in a voice of deep astonishment, as he opened the middle window on a level with the boat

"Yes, Tom God has taken care of me, to bring me to you Get in quickly. Is there no one else?"

"No," said Tom, stepping into the boat, "I fear the man is drowned he was carried down the Ripple, I think, when part of the Mill fell with the crash of trees and stones against it. I've shouted again and again, and there has been no answer Give me the oars, Maggie"

It was not till Tom had pushed off and they were on the wide water—he face to face with Maggie—that the full meaning of what had happened rushed upon his mind It came with so overpowering a force—it was such a new revelation to his spirit, of the depths in life, that had lain beyond his vision which he had fancied so keen and clear—that he was unable to ask a question. They sat mutely gazing at each other Maggie with eyes of intense life looking out from a weary, beaten face—Tom pale with a certain awe and humiliation. Thought was busy though the lips were silent and though he could ask no question, he guessed a story of almost miraculous divinely protected effort But at last a mist gathered over the blue-grey eyes, and the lips found a word they could utter the old childish—"Magsie!"

Maggie could make no answer but a long deep sob of that mysterious wondrous happiness that is one with pain.

## AGAIN UNITED

As soon as she could speak, she said; " We will go to Lucy, Tom: we'll go and see if she is safe, and then we can help the rest "

Tom rowed with untired vigour, and with a different speed from poor Maggie's. The boat was soon in the current of the river again, and soon they would be at Tofton.

" Park House stands high up out of the flood," said Maggie. " Perhaps they have got Lucy there "

Nothing else was said, a new danger was being carried towards them by the river. Some wooden machinery had just given way on one of the wharves, and huge fragments were being floated along. The sun was rising now, and the wide area of watery desolation was spread out in dreadful clearness around them—in dreadful clearness floated onwards the hurrying, threatening masses. A large company in a boat that was working its way along under the Tofton houses observed their danger, and shouted, " Get out of the current ! "

But that could not be done at once, and Tom, looking before him, saw death rushing on them. Huge fragments, clinging together in fatal fellowship, made one wide mass across the stream.

" It is coming, Maggie ! " Tom said, in a deep hoarse voice, loosing the oars, and clasping her.

The next instant the boat was no longer seen upon the water—and the huge mass was hurrying on in hideous triumph.

But soon the keel of the boat reappeared, a black speck on the golden water.

The boat reappeared—but brother and sister had gone down in an embrace never to be parted. Living through again in one supreme moment the days when they had clasped their little hands in love, and roamed the daisied fields together.



## MARGARET OLIPHANT

### *Historical Sketches*

MARGARET OLIPHANT (1828-97) was born and brought up near Edinburgh. In 1852 she married her cousin, and thereafter she resided in the South of England. For a long time she was a most popular and industrious writer, producing more than a hundred and twenty novels, as well as a large number of literary and historical works.

We give an extract from her *Historical Sketches during the Reign of George II* (1869). Our passage tells of the voyage of Anson round Cape Horn. In 1740 Anson, with six war-ships, was sent out to attack the Spanish possessions in South America. This expedition entailed a voyage round Cape Horn. Two of his ships failed to round the Horn and turned back, one was wrecked, and (as is shown in the extract) only three reached the rendezvous of Juan Fernandez. The strength of the ships' crews had fallen from 961 to 335.

Later, Anson raided the Spanish colonies, and finally, with only the *Centurion* left out of all his ships, he reached England by way of China and the Cape of Good Hope, in June, 1743.

## ROUNDING CAPE HORN

**A** LAS! It was only now they were upon the dreaded Cape, their terror throughout their voyage. Instead of proving, as they hoped, a gateway into the soft Pacific, the wild channel was but the avenue to destruction. "The day of our passage was the last cheerful day that the greatest part of us would ever live to enjoy," says the Chaplain, mournfully, and it is here that the tragic interest of his narrative begins. Before they were well out of the shadow of the rocks, the terrible truth burst upon them. The blue sky darkened over, the wind changed, the tide turned—"furiously," says the historian. A violent current (he can use no milder words), aided by the "fierceness and constancy of the westerly winds," drove them to eastward. For forty days, almost without intermission, they were driven and tossed, playthings of the waters, up and down in miserable zigzags, about the awful Cape, now menaced by "mountainous waves," any one of which, had it broken fairly over them, would have sent them to the bottom, now dashed almost to pieces by the rolling of the ship—their sails torn off by the winds, split by the frost—their rigging covered with ice, their bodies benumbed and disabled by the cold. Sometimes a fog came on, and the Commodore, himself struggling for bare life, fired forlorn guns every half-hour—flashes of despair to keep the perishing ships together. Yet all this time, in the height of their misery, there still lingered a cheerful assurance of hope. According to all they knew, they had been making their way steadily towards the Pacific. It could not but be near at hand, and their toils near a close. And with every day of storm

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the longing for that sea of peace, for those isles, and "opulent coasts," must have grown on the weary crews, who, any hour, any moment—so they thought—might suddenly glide into the rippling waters and sunny calm. It may be supposed, accordingly, what was the consternation of the sailors, thus strained to the supreme struggle, when they found that they had been betrayed by an insidious current completely out of their course, and saw once more the awful rocks of Tierra del Fuego frowning out of the mists upon their lee.

Before this time scurvy, most dreaded of all the dangers of a long sea-voyage, had made its fatal appearance among them. With their feeble old pensioners and rapidly made-up crews, sickness had been rife in the ships from the very beginning of the voyage, and it is evident that Anson's good sense and good feeling had forestalled sanitary science so far as to do all that was possible for the ventilation and cleanliness of his crowded vessel. So early as November the sickly condition of the crews and the want of air between the decks had been reported to him, and by the time they arrived at St Catherine's it was found necessary to give the *Centurion* a "thorough cleansing, smoking it between the decks, and after all, washing every part well with vinegar,"—a precaution made needful by the "noisome stench" and vermin, which had become "intolerably offensive." This being so when things went comparatively well, it may be imagined what these decks must have got to be when every comfort and almost every hope had abandoned the unhappy mass of suffering men, drenched with salt water, frozen with cold, worn with continual labour, who flung themselves upon them to die. During their terrible beatings about Cape Horn, the scurvy took stronger and stronger hold upon them. In April they lost forty-three men from it on board the *Centurion* alone, in May double that number; in June, before they reached Juan Fernandez, "the disease extended itself so prodigiously that, after the loss of about two hundred men, we could not at last

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muster more than six foremast men in a watch capable of duty." The officers themselves (and, still more remarkably, the officers' servants) seem to have escaped the attacks of this disease, fortified either by the tremendous burden of responsibility, or by that curious force of high spirit and finer mettle which carries so many absolutely weaker men through the perils which slay the strongest. Our Chaplain records the characteristics of the disease with that grave and calm simplicity which distinguishes his style, revealing its full horrors, yet never dwelling unduly on them. Some of its victims, he describes, lay in their hammocks eating and drinking, in cheerful spirits, and with vigorous voices, yet in a moment, if but moved from one place to another, still in their hammocks, died out of hand, all vital energy being gone from them. Some who thought themselves still able for an attempt at duty would fall down and die among their comrades on attempting a stronger pull or more vigorous strain than usual. Every day, while winds and waves, roaring and threatening round, held over the whole shipload another kind of death, must the dim-eyed mariners with failing strength and sinking spirit have gathered to the funeral of their dead. By this time their companion ships had all disappeared, and the *Centurion* alone, with its sick and dying, tossed about almost at the will of the waves upon that desolate sea. At last there came a moment when, destruction being imminent, "the master and myself," our brave Chaplain, undertook the management of the helm, while every available soul on board set to work to repair and set the sails and secure the masts, to take advantage once more in desperation of a favourable change of wind.

This was their last storm, but not even then were the troubles of this terrible voyage at an end. They missed Juan Fernandez by one of those mistakes which come in with bewildering certainty at such moments of desperation to enhance all sufferings. "The Commodore himself was strongly persuaded that he saw it," but, over-

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powered by the scepticism of his officers, changed his course in over-precaution. Then at last the high hearts of the expedition gave way. The water was failing, to add to all the rest, men were dying five and six every day "A general dejection prevailed among us," says the historian. It was at this moment, when hope and heart were wellnigh gone, that the island of their hopes, all smiling in the sullen seas, with soft woods and grassy slopes and sweet streams of running water, suddenly burst like a glimpse of paradise upon their hungering eyes.

Nothing can be more touching than the sober, simple story, as it describes this deliverance out of despair. The feeble creatures, to whom water had become the first of luxuries, hastened on deck as fast as their tottering limbs would carry them, to gaze with eyes athirst at a great cascade of living water flinging itself, with the wantonness of nature, over a rock a hundred feet high into the sea. The first boat sent on shore brought back heaps of *grass*, having no time to search for better vegetables. The spectre crew were four hours at work, with the assistance of all the ghosts from below who could keep their feeble legs, to raise the cable, when it was necessary to change their anchorage, and could not manage it with all their united strength. But yet the haven was reached, the tempest over for the moment. The ship had but settled to her moorings when a tiny sail bore bravely up upon the newly arrived, and proved to be the *Trial*, valorous little sloop, which had held its own against all the dangers encountered by the *Centurion*, and now found its way to the trysting-place, with only its captain, lieutenant, and three men able to stand by the sails. A fortnight later, some of the sailors, gazing out from a height upon the sea, saw, or fancied they saw, another sail faintly beating about the horizon. In five days more it appeared again, making feeble futile attempts to enter the safe shelter in which Anson lay. The watchful Commodore sent out instant help, risking his boats and refreshed convalescent men to save his consort, and by

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this timely help kept them alive, until, after three weeks or more of fruitless attempts, the *Gloucester* at last got into the bay, having lost three-fourths of her crew. Three weather-beaten hulks, with torn sails and broken masts; three groups of worn-out men escaped as from the dead, looked each other in the face in this lull of fate. With the whisper of the soft woods in their ears, and delicious noise and tinkle of running water, instead of the roaring of the winds and the sea, what salutations, from the edge of the grave, must have been theirs! The brave Commodore set to work, without the loss of an hour, to remove the sick to shore—not a man among them laboured harder than he, the leader, and his officers followed his example, willingly or unwillingly. From one vessel after another the helpless and suffering were landed, to be healed and soothed out of their miseries. Green things of better quality than grass, and fresh fish, and flesh of goats, and new-made bread, consoled the worn-out wretches, and rest stole into the souls of the almost lost Anson for his own part, with a touch of sentiment which speaks out of the utter silence in which he is content to leave himself, with a power beyond that of words, chose for himself an idyllic resting-place in this moment of repose.

“I despair of conveying an adequate idea of its beauty,” says our Chaplain—who, let us hope, shared it with his master. “The piece of ground that he chose was a small lawn that lay on a little ascent, at the distance of about half a mile from the sea. In the front of his tent there was a large avenue cut through the woods to the seaside, which, sloping to the water with a gentle descent, opened a prospect of the bay and the ships at anchor. This lawn was screened behind by a tall wood of myrtle, sweeping round it in the form of a theatre. . . . There were, besides, two streams of crystal water which ran on the right and left of the tent, within one hundred yards’ distance, and were shaded by the trees which skirted the lawn on either side.”

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He thinks some faint idea of "the elegance of this situation" may be gleaned from a print which, unfortunately, is not to be found in the edition before us. A certain suppressed poetry of mind must have been in the man who, after such desperate encounter with primitive dangers, pitched his lonely tent between those running rills, with the bay and his ships at anchor softly framed at his feet by the sweet myrtle boughs. Does not the reader hear the sudden hush in the stormy strain—

A sound as of a hidden brook,  
In the leafy month of June

With what a profound harmony does this momentary vision of repose and tender quiet fall into the tale, all ajar with the danger of warring winds and waves!

While Anson was drawing this breath of tranquillity and health, and taking up again, undismayed, the thread of his plans against the enemy, the other admiral, Vernon, with his splendid fleet and armament, had collapsed all into nothing. Long before, indeed, in April, while dauntless Anson, without a thought of turning back in his mind, was going through his agony round Cape Horn, the struggle was over for that rival who had outshone, outnumbered, and swallowed up his poor little expedition. The big fleet which sailed amid the cheers of England had beat back, all broken, disgraced, and discomfited, to Jamaica—driven miserably away from before the face of that old Spanish foreshadowing of a grim Sebastopol, known as Carthagenia—ere our little squadron painfully got itself together in the bay, at Juan Fernandez. Our Commodore, of course, could know nothing of that disaster, and indeed was still pondering in his mind how even yet, even now, his ragged shipwrecked band might carry something home to balance the conquests of those rustling gallants. Never could a greater contrast have been, and it was well for England that the chief seaman of so critical an age was not poor popular Vernon re-criminating with his General at Jamaica, but Anson,

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musings alone on the island lawn, just out of the jaws of death, planning a thousand daring adventures, with his eyes fixed on the deceitful quiet of that Southern Sea

### EXERCISES

1 *Vocabulary* Compose sentences to show the meanings of the following

avenue, constancy, benumbed, opulent, insidious, noisome, prodigiously, responsibility, characteristics, vital, imminent, enhance, scepticism, dejection, paradise, cascade, convalescent, consort, delicious, idyllic, momentary

2 *Geography*

(a) Write a note on the geography of Tierra del Fuego and Juan Fernandez

(b) Sketch in outline the voyage of Anson round the world

3 *Interpretation* Give in your own words the impression you have gathered of the island of Juan Fernandez, as it is described by Mrs Oliphant

4 *Composition*

(a) Write an essay on "A Storm at Sea"

(b) Compare sea-travel in the olden days with sea-travel to-day

(c) Write the log of an officer of H M S *Centurion*



## NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

### *Twice-told Tales*

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE (1804-64), one of America's foremost writers, was born at Salem, Massachusetts, and from his earliest years he devoted himself to literature. At first he was unsuccessful, but *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) made his fame secure. This story, which dealt with the life of early Puritan America, was followed with *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) and *A Wonder Book* (1851). This last book, which is based on the early Greek legends, was followed by *Tanglewood Tales* (1853) and *Twice-told Tales*.

We give a short story from *Twice-told Tales*.

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WE can be but partially acquainted even with the events which actually influence our course through life and our final destiny. There are other events, if such they may be called, which come close upon us, yet pass away without actual results, or even betraying their near approach, by the reflection of any light or shadow across our minds. Could we know all the vicissitudes of our fortunes, life would be too full of hope and fear to afford us a single hour of true serenity. This idea may be illustrated by a page from the secret history of David Swan.

We have nothing to do with David until we find him, at the age of twenty, on the high-road from his native place to the city of Boston, where his uncle, a small dealer in the grocery line, was to take him behind the counter. Be it enough to say that he was a native of New Hampshire, born of respectable parents, and had received an ordinary school education, with a classic finish by a year at Gilmanton Academy.

After journeying on foot from sunrise till nearly noon of a summer's day, his weariness and the increasing heat determined him to sit down in the first convenient shade and await the coming up of the stage-coach. As if planted on purpose for him, there soon appeared a little tuft of maples, with a delightful recess in the midst, and such a fresh bubbling spring that it seemed never to have sparkled for any wayfarer but David Swan. He kissed it with his thirsty lips, and then flung himself along the brink, pillowing his head upon some shirts and a pair of pantaloons tied up in a striped cotton handkerchief.

The sunbeams could not reach him; the dust did not

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yet rise from the road, after the heavy rain of yesterday ; and his grassy lair suited the young man better than a bed of down The spring murmured drowsily beside him ; the branches waved dreamily across the blue sky overhead , and a deep sleep, perchance hiding dreams within its depths, fell upon David Swan But we are to relate events which he did not dream of

While he lay sound asleep in the shade, other people were wide awake and passed to and fro afoot, on horseback, and in all sorts of vehicles along the sunny road by his bedchamber Some looked neither to the right hand nor the left, and knew not that he was there , some merely glanced that way, without admitting the slumberer among their busy thoughts , some laughed to see how soundly he slept, and several, whose hearts were brimming full of scorn, ejected it on David Swan

He had slept only a few moments, when a brown carriage, drawn by a handsome pair of horses, bowed easily along, and was brought to a standstill nearly in front of David's resting-place A linchpin had fallen out, and permitted one of the wheels to slide off The damage was slight, and occasioned merely a momentary alarm to an elderly merchant and his wife, who were returning to Boston in the carriage

While the coachman and a servant were replacing the wheel the lady and gentleman sheltered themselves beneath the maple-trees, and there espied the bubbling fountain and David Swan asleep beside it Impressed with the awe which the humblest sleeper usually sheds around him, the merchant trod as lightly as the gout would allow ; and his spouse took good heed not to rustle her silk gown, lest David should start up all of a sudden

"How soundly he sleeps!" whispered the old gentleman "From what a depth he draws that easy breath! Such sleep as that, brought on without an opiate, would be worth more to me than half my income; for it would suppose health and an untroubled mind"

"And youth besides," said the lady. "Healthy and

## DAVID SWAN

quiet age does not sleep thus Our slumber is no more like his than our wakefulness ”

The longer they looked the more did this elderly couple feel interested in the unknown youth to whom the wayside and the maple shade were as a secret chamber, with the rich gloom of damask curtains brooding over him Perceiving that a stray sunbeam glimmered down upon his face, the lady contrived to twist a branch aside so as to intercept it, and having done this little act of kindness, she began to feel like a mother to him

“ Providence seems to have laid him here,” whispered she to her husband, “ and to have brought us hither to find him, after our disappointment in our cousin’s son Methinks I can see a likeness to our departed Henry Shall we waken him? ”

“ To what purpose? ” said the merchant, hesitating “ We know nothing of the youth’s character ”

“ That open countenance! ” replied his wife, in the same hushed voice, yet earnestly “ *This innocent sleep!* ”

While these whispers were passing, the sleeper’s heart did not throb, nor his breath become agitated, nor his features betray the least token of interest Yet Fortune was bending over him, just ready to let fall a burden of gold The old merchant had lost his only son, and had no heir to his wealth except a distant relative, with whose conduct he was dissatisfied In such cases people sometimes do stranger things than to act the magician, and awaken a young man to splendour who fell asleep in poverty

“ Shall we not waken him? ” repeated the lady persuasively

“ The coach is ready, sir,” said the servant, behind

The old couple started, reddened, and hurried away, mutually wondering that they should ever have dreamed of doing anything so very ridiculous The merchant threw himself back in the carriage, and occupied his mind with the plan of a magnificent asylum for unfortunate men of business. Meanwhile, David Swan enjoyed his nap

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The carriage could not have gone above a mile or two when a pretty young girl came along, with a tripping pace, which showed precisely how her little heart was dancing in her bosom. She turned aside into the shelter of the maple-trees, and there found a young man asleep by the spring! But there was peril near the sleeper. A monster of a bee had been wandering overhead—buzz, buzz, buzz—now among the leaves, now flashing through the strips of sunshine, and now lost in the dark shade, till finally he appeared to be settling on the eyelid of David Swan.

The sting of a bee is sometimes deadly. As free-hearted as she was innocent, the girl attacked the intruder with her handkerchief, brushed him soundly, and drove him from beneath the maple shade. How sweet a picture! This good deed accomplished, with quickened breath and a deep blush, she stole a glance at the youthful stranger for whom she had been battling with a dragon in the air.

“He is handsome!” thought she, and blushed redder yet.

How could it be that no dream of bliss grew so strong within him that, shattered by its very strength, it should part asunder and allow him to perceive the girl among its phantoms? Why, at least, did no smile of welcome brighten upon his face?

“How sound he sleeps!” murmured the girl.

She departed, but did not trip along the road so lightly as when she came. Now, this girl’s father was a thriving country merchant in the neighbourhood, and happened, at that very time, to be looking out for just such a young man as David Swan. Had David formed a wayside acquaintance with the daughter, he would have become the father’s clerk, and all else in natural succession. So here, again, had good Fortune—the best of fortunes—stolen so near that her garments brushed against him; and he knew nothing of the matter.

The girl was hardly out of sight when two men turned aside beneath the maple shade. Both had dark faces, set off by cloth caps, which were drawn down aslant over

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their brows. Their dresses were shabby, yet had a certain smartness. These were a couple of rascals, who got their living in whatever way they could, and now, in the interim of other business, had staked the joint profits of their next piece of villainy on a game of cards, which was to have been decided here under the trees. But finding David asleep by the spring, one of the rogues whispered to his fellow.

"Hist! Do you see that bundle under his head?"

The other villain nodded, winked, and leered

"I'll bet you a horn of brandy," said the first, "that the chap has either a pocket-book or a snug little hoard of small change stowed away among his shirts. And if not there, we shall find it in his pocket."

"But how if he wakes?" said the other

His companion thrust aside his waistcoat, pointed to the handle of a dirk, and nodded

"So be it!" muttered the second villain

They approached the unconscious David, and while one pointed the dagger towards his heart, the other began to search the bundle beneath his head. Their two faces, grim, wrinkled, and ghastly with guilt and fear, bent over their victim, looking horrible enough to be mistaken for fiends, should he suddenly awake. Nay, had the villains glanced into the spring, even they would hardly have known themselves as reflected there. But David Swan had never worn a more tranquil aspect, even when asleep on his mother's breast

"I must take away the bundle," whispered one

"If he stirs I'll strike," muttered the other

But at this moment a dog, scenting along the ground, came in beneath the maple-trees, and gazed alternately at each of these wicked men, and then at the quiet sleeper. He then lapped out of the fountain

"Pshaw!" said one villain. "We can do nothing now. The dog's master must be close behind."

"Let's take a drink and be off," said the other

The man with the dagger thrust back the weapon into

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his bosom, and they left the spot, with so many jests, and such laughter at their unaccomplished wickedness, that they might be said to have gone on their way rejoicing. In a few hours they had forgotten the whole affair, nor once imagined that the recording angel had written down the crime of murder against their souls, in letters as durable as eternity. As for David Swan, he still slept quietly, neither conscious of the shadow of death when it hung over him, nor of the glow of renewed life when that shadow was withdrawn.

He slept, but no longer so quietly as at first. An hour's repose had snatched from his elastic frame the weariness with which many hours of toil had burdened it. Now he stirred—now moved his lips, without a sound—now talked, in an inward tone, to the noonday spectres of his dream. But a noise of wheels came rattling louder and louder along the road, until it dashed through the dispersing mist of David's slumber—and there was the stage-coach. He started up, with all his ideas about him.

"Halloo, driver! Take a passenger?" shouted he.

"Room on top!" answered the driver.

Up mounted David, and bowled away merrily towards Boston, without so much as a parting glance at that fountain of dream-like vicissitude. He knew not that a phantom of Wealth had thrown a golden hue upon its waters, nor that one of Love had sighed softly to their murmur, nor that one of Death had threatened to crimson them with his blood—all in the brief hour since he lay down to sleep. Sleeping or waking, we hear not the fairy footsteps of the strange things that almost happen.

## EXERCISES

1 *Meanings* The following are examples of the author's slightly formal and archaic style. Turn the expressions into simpler English.

- (a) Could we know all the vicissitudes of our fortunes.
- (b) He kissed the fountain with his thirsty lips.
- (c) The damage occasioned merely a momentary alarm.
- (d) Methinks I can see a likeness to our departed Henry.

## DAVID SWAN

- (e) To what purpose?
- (f) In the interim of other business.
- (g) The noonday spectres of his dream
- 2 *Précis*. Summarize the story of David Swan
- 3. *Interpretation* What lesson is the author trying to teach in the story? Illustrate from the story itself.
- 4 *Composition*
  - (a) Describe a stage-coach journey
  - (b) Write the autobiography of David Swan.
  - (c) Write an essay on "Hiking"





*SUMMER TERM*



## SAMUEL BUTLER

### *Erewhon*

SAMUEL BUTLER (1835-1902) was educated at Shrewsbury School, where his grandfather was headmaster. Thence he proceeded to Cambridge, his intention being to become a clergyman. He abandoned this intention, however, and emigrated to New Zealand, where he settled on a farm near Canterbury. Within five years he had saved up enough money to return to England with a small competence. For the remainder of his life he devoted his energies to the pursuit of his various interests, such as literature (especially the classics), music (especially Handel), and painting (especially the early Italian masters).

Butler was a man of peculiar ideas and a satirist of no mean quality. He could express himself strongly upon education, religion, science, and art. Many of his peculiar notions are enunciated in his novel, *Erewhon* (1872). This book professes to be the story of a New Zealand settler, a young man who penetrates into a mysterious country 'over the range'. At the outset it is a story of engrossing interest, for Butler knows the country well, and can describe it brilliantly. Once over the range, the settler discovers the 'Erewhonians,' and then the book develops into a satire upon modern civilization, in the manner of *Gulliver's Travels*. By comparing us with the simple Erewhonians, Butler shows us up very badly.

Our extract shows the crossing of the range. With the settler goes Chowbok, a native who first had inflamed the young man's zeal for exploration by giving mysterious hints about the region on the far side of the mountains.

## OVER THE RANGE

### I

NEXT morning it was fine, we broke camp, and after advancing a short distance we found that by descending over ground less difficult than yesterday's, we should come again upon the river-bed, which had opened out above the gorge, but it was plain at a glance that there was no available sheep country, nothing but a few flats covered with scrub on either side the river, and mountains which were perfectly worthless. But we could see the main range. There was no mistake about this. The glaciers were tumbling down the mountains like cataracts, and seemed actually to descend upon the river-bed, there could be no serious difficulty in reaching them by following up the river, which was wide and open, but it seemed rather an objectless thing to do, for the main range looked hopeless, and my curiosity about the nature of the country above the gorge was now quite satisfied, there was no money in it whatever, unless there should be minerals, of which I saw no more signs than lower down.

However, I resolved that I would follow the river up, and not return until I was compelled to do so. I would go up every branch as far as I could, and wash well for gold. Chowbok liked seeing me do this, but it never came to anything, for we did not even find the colour. His dislike of the main range appeared to have worn off, and he made no objections to approaching it. I thought he believed that there was no danger of my trying to cross it, and he was not afraid of anything on this side, besides, we might find gold. But the fact was that he had made up his mind what to do if he saw me getting too near it.

## OVER THE RANGE

We passed three weeks in exploring, and never did I find time go more quickly. The weather was fine, though the nights got very cold. We followed every stream but one, and always found that it led us to a glacier which was plainly impassable, at any rate without a larger party and ropes. One stream remained, which I should have followed up already, had not Chowbok said that he had risen early one morning, while I was yet asleep, and gone up for three or four miles, and seen that it was quite impossible to go farther. I had long ago discovered that he was a great liar, and so I was bent on going up myself. In brief, I did so—it was *not* impossible, it was quite easy travelling, and after five or six miles I saw a saddle at the end of it, which, though covered deep in snow, was not glaciated, and which did verily appear to me to be part of the main range itself. No words can express the intensity of my delight. My blood fell on a fire with hope and elation; but on looking round for Chowbok, who was behind me, I saw to my surprise and anger that he had turned back, and was going down the valley as hard as he could. He had left me.

I cooeied to him, but he would not hear. I ran after him, but he had got too good a start. Then I sat down on a stone and thought the matter carefully over. It was plain that Chowbok had designedly attempted to keep me from going up this valley, yet he had shown no unwillingness to follow me anywhere else. What could this mean, unless that I was now upon the route by which alone the mysteries of the great ranges could be revealed? What then should I do? go back at the very moment when it had become plain that I was on the right scent? Hardly; yet to proceed alone would be a most difficult and dangerous undertaking. It would be bad enough to return to my master's run, and pass through the rocky gorges, with no chance of help from another should I get into a difficulty; but to advance for any considerable distance without a companion would be next door to madness. Accidents which are slight when there is another at hand

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(as the spraining of an ankle, or the falling into some place whence escape would be easy by means of an outstretched hand and a bit of rope), may be fatal to one who is alone. The more I pondered the less I liked it; and yet, the less could I make up my mind to return when I looked at the head of the valley, and noted the comparative ease with which its smooth sweep of snow might be surmounted: I seemed to see my way almost from my present position to the very top. After much thought, I resolved that I would go forward until I should come to some place which was really dangerous, but that I would then return. I should thus, I hoped, at any rate reach the top of the saddle, and satisfy myself as to what might be on the other side.

I had no time to lose, for it was now between ten and eleven in the morning and the days had begun to shorten. Fortunately I was well equipped, for on leaving the camp and the horses at the lower end of the valley I had provided myself (according to my custom) with everything that I was likely to want for four or five days. Chowbok had carried half, but had dropped his whole swag—I suppose, at the moment of his taking flight—for I came upon it when I ran after him. I had, therefore, his provisions as well as my own. Accordingly, I took as many biscuits as I thought I could carry, and also some tobacco, tea, and a few matches. I rolled them neatly inside my blankets: outside these I rolled Chowbok's blankets, and strapped them very tightly, making the whole into a long roll of some seven feet in length and ten inches in diameter. Then I tied the two ends together, and put the whole round my neck and over one shoulder. *This is the easiest way of carrying a heavy swag, for one can rest one's self by shifting the burden from one shoulder to the other.* I strapped my pannikin and a small axe about my waist, and, having thus prepared, began to ascend the valley, angry at having been misled by Chowbok, but fully resolved that I would not return until I was compelled to do so.

## OVER THE RANGE

I crossed and recrossed the stream several times without difficulty, for there were many good fords. At one o'clock I was at the foot of the saddle; four hours I mounted, the last two on the snow, where the going was easier; by five I was within ten minutes of the top, in a state of excitement greater, I think, than I had ever known before. Ten minutes more, and the cold air from the other side came rushing upon me

A glance. I was *not* on the main range

Another glance. There was an awful river, muddy and horribly angry, roaring over an immense river-bed, thousands of feet below me

It went round to the westward, and I could see no farther up the valley, save that there were enormous glaciers which must extend round the source of the river, and from which it must spring

Another glance, and I then remained motionless

There was an easy pass in the mountains directly opposite to me, through which I caught a glimpse of an immeasurable extent of blue and distant plains

Easy? Yes, perfectly easy, grassed nearly to the summit, which was, as it were, an open path between two glaciers, from which an inconsiderable stream came tumbling down over rough but very possible hill-sides, till it got down to the level of the great river, and formed a flat where there was grass and good timber.

Almost before I could believe my eyes, a cloud had come up from the valley on the other side, and the plains were hidden. What wonderful luck was mine! Had I arrived five minutes later, the cloud would have been over the pass, and I should never have known of its existence. Now that the cloud was there, I began to doubt my memory, and to be uncertain whether it had been more than a blue line of distant vapour that had filled up the opening. I could only be certain of this much, namely, that the river in the valley below must be the one next to the northward of that which flowed past my master's station; of this there could be no doubt. Could I, how-



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ever, imagine that my luck should have led me up a wrong river in search of a pass, and yet brought me to the spot where I should detect the one weak place in the fortifications of a more northern basin? This was too improbable. But even as I doubted there came a rent in the cloud opposite, and a second time I saw blue lines of heaving downs, growing gradually fainter, and retiring into a far space of plain. It was substantial; there had been no mistake soever. I had hardly made myself perfectly sure of this ere the rent in the clouds joined up again, and I could see nothing more.

What, then, should I do? The night would be upon me shortly, and I was already chilled with standing still after the exertion of climbing. To stay where I was would be impossible, I must either go backwards or forwards. I found a rock which gave me shelter from the evening wind, and took a good pull at the brandy flask, which immediately warmed and encouraged me.

I asked myself, Could I descend upon the river-bed beneath me? It was impossible to say what precipices might prevent my doing so. If I were on the river-bed, dare I cross the river? I am an excellent swimmer, yet, once in that frightful rush of waters, I should be hurled whithersoever it willed, absolutely powerless. Moreover, there was my swag, I should perish of cold and hunger if I left it, but I should certainly be drowned if I attempted to carry it across the river. These were serious considerations, but the hope of finding an immense tract of available sheep country (which I was determined that I would monopolize as far as I possibly could) sufficed to outweigh them, and, in a few minutes, I felt resolved that, having made so important a discovery as a pass into a country which was probably as valuable as that on our own side of the ranges, I would follow it up and ascertain its value, even though I should pay the penalty of failure with life itself. The more I thought, the more I was settled in my mind that I would either win for myself the chance of fame and fortune, by entering upon this unknown world,

## OVER THE RANGE

or consent to give up life in the attempt. In fact, I felt that life would be no longer valuable if I were to have seen so great a prize, and refused to grasp at the possible profits therefrom.

I had still an hour of good daylight during which I might begin my descent on to some possible camping ground, but there was not a moment to be lost. At first I got along rapidly, for I was on the snow, and sank into it enough to save me from falling, though I went forward straight down the mountain side as fast as I could; but there was less snow on this side than on the other, and I had soon done with it, getting on to a coomb of dangerous and very stony ground, where a slip might have given me a disastrous fall. But I was careful with all my speed, and got safely to the bottom, where there were patches of coarse grass, and an attempt here and there at brushwood, what was below this I could not see. I advanced a few hundred yards farther, and found that I was on the brink of a frightful precipice, which no one in his senses would attempt descending. I bethought me, however, to try the creek which drained the coomb, and see whether it might not have made itself a smoother way. In a few minutes I found myself at the upper end of a chasm in the rocks, something like Twll Dhu, only on a greatly larger scale; the creek had found its way into it, and had worn a deep channel through a material which appeared much softer than that upon the other side of the mountain. I believe it must have been a different geological formation, though I regret to say that I cannot tell what it was, except that it seemed to resemble that light friable kind of porphyry of which St Michael's and other churches are built at Coventry.

I looked at this rift in great doubt, then I went a little way on either side of it, and found myself looking over the edge of horrible precipices on to the river, which roared some four or five thousand feet below me. I dared not think of getting down at all, unless I committed myself to the rift, of which I was hopeful when I reflected that the

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rock was soft, and that the water might have worn its channel tolerably evenly through the whole extent. The darkness was increasing every minute, but I should have twilight for another half-hour, so I went into the chasm (though by no means without fear), and resolved to return and camp, and try some other path next day, should I come to any serious difficulty. In about five minutes I had completely lost my head, the sides of the rift became hundreds of feet in height, and overhung so that I could see no sky. It was full of rocks, and I had many falls and bruises. I was wet through from falling into the water, of which there was no great volume, but it had such force that I could do nothing against it, once I had to leap down a not inconsiderable waterfall into a deep pool below, and my swag was so heavy that I was nearly drowned. I had indeed a hair's-breadth escape, but, as luck would have it, Providence was on my side. Shortly afterwards I began to fancy that the rift was getting wider, and that there was more brushwood. Presently I found myself on an open grassy slope, and feeling my way a little farther along the stream, I came upon a flat place with wood, where I could camp comfortably, which was well, for it was now quite dark.

### II

My first care was for my matches, were they dry? The outside of my swag had got completely wet, but, on undoing the blankets, I found things warm and dry within. How thankful I was! I lit a fire, and was grateful for its warmth and company. I made myself some tea, and ate two of my biscuits. my brandy I did not touch, for I had little left, and might want it when my courage failed me. All that I did, I did almost mechanically, for I could not realize my situation to myself, being alone, and knowing that return through the chasm which I had just descended would be almost impossible, and being utterly uncertain about the future. It is a dreadful feeling, that of being cut off from all one's kind. I was still full of hope and built

## OVER THE RANGE

golden castles for myself as soon as I was warmed with food and fire, but I do not believe that any man could long retain his reason in such solitude, unless he had the companionship of animals. One begins to doubt one's own identity

I remember deriving comfort even from the sight of my blankets, and the sound of my watch ticking—things which seemed to link me to other people, but the screaming of the wood-hens frightened me, as also a chattering bird which I had never heard before, and which seemed to laugh at me, though I soon got used to it, and before long could fancy that it was many years since I had first heard it

I took off my clothes, and wrapped my inside blanket about me, till my things were dry. The night was very still, and I made a roaring fire; so I soon got warm, then at last could put my clothes on again. Then I strapped my blanket round me, and went to sleep as near the fire as I could.

I dreamed that there was an organ placed in my master's wool-shed, the wool-shed faded away, and the organ seemed to grow and grow amid a blaze of brilliant light, till it became like a golden city upon the side of a mountain, with rows upon rows of pipes set in cliffs and precipices, one above the other, and in mysterious caverns, like that of Fingal, within whose depths I could see the burnished pillars gleaming. In the front there was a flight of lofty terraces, at the top of which I could see a man with his head buried forward towards a key-board, and his body swaying from side to side amid the storm of huge arpeggiated harmonies that came crashing overhead and round. Then there was one who touched me on the shoulder, and said, "Do you not see? it is Handel", but I had hardly comprehended, and was trying to scale the terraces, and get near him, when I awoke, dazzled with the vividness and distinctness of the dream.

A piece of wood had burned through, and the ends had fallen into the ashes with a blaze. this, I supposed, had

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both given me my dream, and robbed me of it. I was bitterly disappointed, and sitting up on my elbow, came back to reality and my strange surroundings as best I could.

I was thoroughly aroused—moreover, I felt a foreshadowing as though my attention were arrested by something more than the dream, although no sense in particular was as yet appealed to. I held my breath and waited, and then I heard—was it fancy? Nay, I listened again and again, and I did hear a faint and extremely distant sound of music, like that of an Æolian harp, borne upon the wind, which was blowing fresh and chill from the opposite mountains.

The roots of my hair thrilled. I listened, but the wind had died, and, fancying that it must have been the wind itself,—no; on a sudden I remembered the noise which Chowbok had made in the wool-shed. Yes, it was that.

Thank Heaven, whatever it was, it was over now. I reasoned with myself, and recovered my firmness. I became convinced that I had only been dreaming more vividly than usual. Soon I began even to laugh, and think what a fool I was to be frightened at nothing, and reminded myself that, even if I were to come to a bad end, it would be no such dreadful matter after all. I said my prayers, a duty which I had too often neglected, and in a little time fell into a really refreshing sleep, which lasted till broad daylight, and restored me. I rose, and searching among the embers of my fire, I found a few live coals and soon had a blaze again. I got breakfast, and was delighted to have the company of several small birds, which hopped about me, and perched on my boots and hands. I felt comparatively happy, but I can assure the reader that I had a far worse time of it than I have told him, and I strongly recommend him to remain in Europe if he can; or, at any rate, in some country which has been explored and settled, rather than go into places where others have not been before him. Exploring is delightful to look forward to and back upon, but it is not comfortable at the

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time, unless it be of such an easy nature as not to deserve the name . .

After a slow but steady climb of between three and four hours, during which I met with *no serious hindrance*, I found myself upon a tableland, and close to a glacier which I recognized as marking the summit of the pass. Above it towered a succession of rugged precipices, and snowy mountain sides. The solitude was greater than I could bear; the mountain upon my master's sheep-run was a crowded thoroughfare in comparison with this sombre sullen place. The air, moreover, was dark and heavy, which made the loneliness more oppressive. There was an inky gloom over all that was not covered with snow and ice. Grass there was none.

Each moment I felt increasing upon me that dreadful doubt as to my own identity—as to the continuity of my past and present existence—which is the first sign of that distraction which comes on those who have lost themselves in the bush. I had fought against this feeling hitherto, and had conquered it, but the intense silence and gloom of this rocky wilderness were too much for me, and I felt that my power of collecting myself was beginning to be impaired.

I rested for a while, and then advanced over very rough ground, until I reached the lower end of the glacier. Then I saw another glacier, descending from the eastern side into a small lake. I passed along the western side of the lake, where the ground was easier, and when I had got about half-way I expected that I should see the plains which I had already seen from the opposite mountains, but it was not to be so, for the clouds rolled up to the very summit of the pass, though they did not overlap it on to the side from which I had come. I therefore soon found myself enshrouded with a cold thin vapour, which prevented my seeing more than a few yards in front of me. Then I came upon a large patch of old snow, in which I could distinctly trace the half-melted tracks of goats—and in one place, as it seemed to me, there had been a dog

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following them. Had I lighted upon a land of shepherds? The ground, where not covered with snow, was so poor and stony, and there was so little herbage, that I could see no sign of a path or regular sheep track. But I could not help feeling rather uneasy as I wondered what sort of a reception I might meet with if I were to come suddenly upon inhabitants. I was thinking of this, and proceeding cautiously through the mist, when I began to fancy that I saw some objects darker than the cloud looming in front of me. A few steps brought me nearer, and a shudder of unutterable horror ran through me, when I saw a circle of gigantic forms, many times higher than myself, upstanding grim and grey through the veil of cloud before me.

I suppose I must have fainted, for I found myself some time afterwards sitting upon the ground, sick and deadly cold. There were the figures, quite still and silent, seen vaguely through the thick gloom, but in human shape indisputably.

A sudden thought occurred to me, which would have doubtless struck me at once, had I not been prepossessed with forebodings at the time that I first saw the figures, and had not the cloud concealed them from me—I mean that they were not living beings, but statues. I determined that I would count fifty slowly, and was sure that the objects were not alive if during that time I could detect no sign of motion.

How thankful was I when I came to the end of my fifty, and there had been no movement!

I counted a second time—but again all was still.

I then advanced timidly forward, and in another moment I saw that my surmises were correct. I had come upon a sort of Stonehenge of rude and barbaric figures, seated as Chowbok had sat when I questioned him in the wool-shed, and with the same superhumanly malevolent expression upon their faces. They had been all seated, but two had fallen. They were barbarous—neither Egyptian, nor Assyrian, nor Japanese—different from any of these, and yet akin to all. They were six or seven times

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larger than life, of great antiquity, worn and lichen grown. They were ten in number. There was snow upon their heads, and wherever snow could lodge. Each statue had been built of four or five enormous blocks, but how these had been raised and put together is known to those alone who raised them. Each was terrible after a different kind. One was raging furiously, as in pain and great despair; another was lean and cadaverous with famine; another cruel and idiotic, but with the silliest simper that can be conceived—this one had fallen, and looked exquisitely ludicrous in his fall—the mouths of all were more or less open, and as I looked at them from behind, I saw that their heads had been hollowed.

I was sick and shivering with cold. Solitude had unmanned me already, and I was utterly unfit to have come upon such an assembly of fiends in such a dreadful wilderness and without preparation. I would have given everything I had in the world to have been back at my master's station; but that was not to be thought of. my head was going, and I felt sure that I could never get back alive.

Then came a gust of howling wind, accompanied with a moan from one of the statues above me. I clasped my hands in fear. I felt like a rat caught in a trap, as though I would have turned and bitten at whatever thing was nearest me. The wildness of the wind increased, the moans grew shriller, coming from several statues, and swelling into a chorus. I almost immediately knew what it was, but the sound was so unearthly that this was but little consolation. The inhuman beings into whose hearts the Evil One had put it to conceive these statues, had made their heads into a sort of organ pipe, so that their mouths should catch the wind and sound with its blowing. It was horrible. However brave a man might be, he could never stand such a concert, from such lips, and in such a place. I heaped every invective upon them that my tongue could utter, as I rushed away from them into the mist, and even after I had lost sight of them, and turning my head round could see nothing but the stormy wraiths



## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

driving behind me, I heard their ghostly chanting, and felt as though one of them would rush after me, and grip me in his hand, and throttle me.

### EXERCISES

1 *Interpretation* From your reading of the extract, what have you gathered of the narrator's (a) previous circumstances, (b) reasons for crossing the range, (c) hobbies, (d) character generally?

2. *Précis* Condense the narrative into three or four paragraphs

3 *Literature* Do you know of any other satire? Compare it with *Erewhon*

4 *Composition* Write an essay on

(a) An Adventurous Journey, Real or Fictitious

(b) The Joys and Perils of Mountaineering

(c) New Zealand—the Home of the Sheep-farmer.

## JOHN RUSKIN

### *Modern Painters*

JOHN RUSKIN (1819-1900) was born in London and educated privately before going to Oxford. A man of great energy, he was interested chiefly in artistic and social subjects, two interests which he maintained were closely united. He lectured, wrote, and worked upon those two themes, often with little success, for in many ways he was far in advance of his times. His opinions on art were extensively expressed in five large volumes, *Modern Painters* (1843-60). Other books of a similar nature were *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) and *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53). His social work was reflected in *The Two Paths* (1859) and *Unto This Last* (1860).

Ruskin is one of the masters of English prose. He clothes his ideas in language of great beauty and splendour, rich in allusion and melodious in sound. The following extract from *Modern Painters* illustrates these qualities.

## THE BEAUTY OF MOUNTAINS

**T**O myself, mountains are the beginning and the end of all natural scenery, in them, and in the forms of inferior landscape that lead to them, my affections are wholly bound up; and though I can look with happy admiration at the lowland flowers, and woods, and open skies, the happiness is tranquil and cold, like that of examining detached flowers in a conservatory, or reading a pleasant book, and if the scenery be resolutely level, insisting upon the declaration of its own flatness in all the detail of it, as in Holland, or Lincolnshire, or Central Lombardy, it appears to me like a prison, and I cannot long endure it. But the slightest rise and fall in the road—a mossy bank at the side of a crag of chalk, with brambles at its brow, overhanging it—a ripple over three or four stones in the stream by the bridge—above all, a wild bit of ferny ground under a fir or two, looking as if, possibly, one might see a hill if one got to the other side of the trees, will instantly give me intense delight, because the shadow, or the hope, of the hills is in them.

And thus, although there are few districts of Northern Europe, however apparently dull or tame, in which I cannot find pleasure, though the whole of Northern France (except Champagne), dull as it seems to most travellers, is to me a perpetual Paradise; and, putting Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, and one or two such other perfectly flat districts aside, there is not an English county which I should not find entertainment in exploring the cross-roads of, foot by foot; yet all my best enjoyment would be owing to the imagination of the hills, colouring, with their far-away memories, every lowland stone and

## THE BEAUTY OF MOUNTAINS

herb. The pleasant French *coteau*, green in the sunshine, delights me, either by what real mountain character it has in itself (for in extent and succession of promontory the flanks of the French valleys have quite the sublimity of true mountain distances), or by its broken ground and rugged steps among the vines, and rise of the leafage above, against the blue sky, as it might rise at Vevay or Como. There is not a wave of the Seine but is associated in my mind with the first rise of the sandstones and forest pines of Fontainebleau, and with the hope of the Alps, as one leaves Paris with the horses' heads to the south-west, the morning sun flashing on the bright waves at Charenton. If there be *no* hope or association of this kind, and if I cannot deceive myself into fancying that perhaps at the next rise of the road there may be seen the film of a blue hill in the gleam of sky at the horizon, the landscape, however beautiful, produces in me even a kind of sickness and pain; and the whole view from Richmond Hill or Windsor Terrace—nay, the gardens of Alcinous, with their perpetual summer—or of the Hesperides (if they were flat, and not close to Atlas), golden apples and all—I would give away in an instant, for one mossy granite stone a foot broad, and two leaves of lady-fern.

I know that this is in great part idiosyncrasy, and that I must not trust to my own feelings, in this respect, as representative of the modern landscape instinct, yet I know it is not idiosyncrasy, in so far as there may be proved to be indeed an increase of the absolute beauty of all scenery in exact proportion to its mountainous character, providing that character be *healthily* mountainous. I do not mean to take the Col de Bon Homme as representative of hills, any more than I would take Romney Marsh as representative of plains; but putting Leicestershire or Staffordshire fairly beside Westmorland, and Lombardy or Champagne fairly beside the Pays de Vaud or the Canton Berne, I find the increase in the calculable sum of elements of beauty to be steadily in proportion to the increase of mountainous character; and that the best

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image which the world can give of Paradise is in the slope of the meadows, orchards, and cornfields on the sides of a great Alp, with its purple rocks and eternal snows above ; this excellence not being in any wise a matter referable to feeling, or individual preferences, but demonstrable by calm enumeration of the number of lovely colours on the rocks, the varied grouping of the trees, and quantity of noble incidents in stream, crag, or cloud, presented to the eye at any given moment.

For consider, first, the difference produced in the whole tone of landscape colour by the introductions of purple, violet, and deep ultramarine blue, which we owe to mountains. In an ordinary lowland landscape we have the blue of the sky, the green of grass, which I will suppose (and this is an unnecessary concession to the lowlands) entirely fresh and bright, the green of trees ; and certain elements of purple, far more rich and beautiful than we generally should think, in their bark and shadows (bare hedges and thickets, or tops of trees, in subdued afternoon sunshine, are nearly perfect purple, and of an exquisite tone), as well as in ploughed fields, and dark ground in general. But among mountains, in *addition* to all this, large unbroken spaces of pure violet and purple are introduced in their distances, and even near, by films of cloud passing over the darkness of ravines or forests, blues are produced of the most subtle tenderness, these azures and purples passing into rose-colour of otherwise wholly unattainable delicacy among the upper summits, the blue of the sky being at the same time purer and deeper than in the plains. Nay, in some sense, a person who has never seen the rose-colour of the rays of dawn crossing a blue mountain twelve or fifteen miles away, can hardly be said to know what *tenderness* in colour means at all ; *bright* tenderness he may, indeed, see in the sky or in a flower, but this grave tenderness of the far-away hill-purples he cannot conceive.

Together with this great source of pre-eminence in *mass* of colour, we have to estimate the influence of the finished

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inlaying and enamel-work of the colour-jewellery on every stone; and that of the continual variety in species of flower, most of the mountain flowers being, besides, separately lovelier than the lowland ones. The wood hyacinth and wild rose are, indeed, the only *supreme* flowers that the lowlands can generally show, and the wild rose is also a mountaineer, and more fragrant in the hills, while the wood hyacinth, or grape hyacinth, at its best cannot match even the dark bell-gentian, leaving the light-blue star-gentian in its uncontested queenliness, and the Alpine rose and Highland heather wholly without similitude. The violet, lily of the valley, crocus, and wood anemone are, I suppose, claimable partly by the plains as well as the hills, but the large orange lily and narcissus I have never seen but on hill pastures, and the exquisite oxalis is pre-eminently a mountaineer.

To this supremacy in mosses and flowers we have next to add an inestimable gain in the continual presence and power of water. Neither in its clearness, its colour, its fantasy of motion, its calmness of space, depth, and reflection, or its wrath, can water be conceived by a lowlander, out of sight of sea. A sea wave is far grander than any torrent—but of the sea and its influences we are not now speaking, and the sea itself, though it *can* be clear, is never calm, among our shores, in the sense that a mountain lake can be calm. The sea seems only to pause; the mountain lake to sleep, and to dream. Out of sight of the ocean a lowlander cannot be considered ever to have seen water at all. The mantling of the pools in the rock shadows, with the golden flakes of light sinking down through them like falling leaves, the ringing of the thin currents among the shallows, the flash and the clouds of the cascade, the earthquake and foam-fire of the cataract, the long lines of alternate mirror and mist that lull the imagery of the hills reversed in the blue of morning—all these things belong to those hills as their undivided inheritance.

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### EXERCISES

1 *Vocabulary* From this extract make up a list of (a) colours and (b) flowers associated with mountains.

2. *Style* Here is a list of some of Ruskin's beautiful and melodious expressions. Re-read them carefully, paying attention to the music and rhythm of the words. Try to express them in ordinary words, and observe the difference both in melody and rhythm.

(a) The shadow, or the hope, of the hills is in them

(b) The morning sun flashing on the bright waves at Charenton

(c) One mossy granite stone a foot broad, and two leaves of lady-fern

(d) Noble incidents in stream, crag, or cloud

(e) Blues are produced of the most subtle tenderness

(f) Alpine rose and Highland heather wholly without similitude

(g) All these things belong to those hills as their undivided inheritance

3 *Précis* Summarize Ruskin's points in favour of the hills

4 *Composition*

(a) A highlander talks with a lowlander, each praising his own type of country

(b) Write an essay on "A Mountain Stream"

## SIR THOMAS MALORY

### *Le Morte D'Arthur*

WITH SIR THOMAS MALORY we go back to the early stages of English prose. We have no exact information as to when he lived and died, indeed, he may not have lived at all. He may be only a semi-mythical person, of the type of Robin Hood or King Arthur. Nearly all that we know of him is contained in the preface to the first printed edition of his book, *Le Morte D'Arthur*. This was produced by the earliest English printer, Caxton, in 1485. In the preface Caxton tells that the book was written by Sir Thomas Malory in the "ix yere of the reygne of Kyng Edward the furth," which makes it 1469.

*Le Morte D'Arthur* is a collection of tales, derived chiefly from the French. They centre round the figure of King Arthur and deal with the adventures of his Knights of the Round Table. The actual sources of the tales may be early English or early Welsh, for the scene of the legends is actually in the neighbourhood of the Welsh border. The Arthurian legends are of much importance, for they have influenced a great deal of succeeding literature.

The given extract describes the most famous incident in the book. Tennyson (see p. 223) has rendered it into noble blank verse. It is the conclusion of the long story. Sir Mordred, a wicked knight who is either the King's nephew or stepson, stirs up a rebellion. In the last great battle in the west the King and Mordred fight to a finish, both armies being utterly destroyed.



## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

**T**HEN was King Arthur ware where Sir Mordred leaned upon his sword among a great heap of dead men "Now give me my spear," said Arthur unto Sir Lucan; "for yonder I have espied the traitor that all this woe hath wrought"

"Sir, let him be," said Sir Lucan, "for he is unhappy. And if ye pass this unhappy day, ye shall be right well revenged upon him. Therefore, for God's sake, my lord, leave of by this, for, blessed be God, ye have won the field For here we ben three alive, and with Sir Mordred is none alive And, if ye leave off now, this wicked day of destiny is past"

"Tide me death, betide me life," says the King, "now I see him yonder alone, he shall never escape my hands; for at a better avail shall I never have him"

"God speed you well!" said Sir Bedwere

Then the King gat his spear in both his hands, and ran towards Sir Mordred, crying, "Traitor, now is thy death-day come!"

And when Sir Mordred heard King Arthur he ran unto him with his sword drawn in his hand And then King Arthur smote Sir Mordred under the shield with a foin of his spear out through the body more than a fathom And, when Sir Mordred felt that he had his death's wound, he thrust himself, with the might that he had, up to the bur of King Arthur's spear. And right so he smote his father Arthur, with his sword holden in both his hands, on the side of the head, that the sword pierced the helmet and the brain-pan, and therewithal Sir Mordred lay stark dead to the earth

## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

And the noble Arthur fell in a swoon to the earth, and there he swooned oft times And Sir Lucan de Butler and Sir Bedwere oft times heaved him up, and so weakly they led him betwixt them both to a little chapel not far from the seaside And, when the King was there, he thought him well eased

Then heard they people in the field "Now go thou, Sir Lucan," said the King, "and do me to wit what betokens that noise in the field"

So Sir Lucan departed, who was grievously wounded in many places And so, as he went, he saw and hearkened by the moonlight how that pillers and robbers were come into the field to pill and rob many a full noble knight of brooches and beads, of many a good ring and of many a rich jewel And who ever were not dead all out, there they slew them for their harness and their riches When Sir Lucan understood this work, he came to the King as soon as he might, and told him all what he had heard and seen "Therefore be my rede," said Sir Lucan, "it is best that we bring you to some town"

"I would it were so," said the King, "but I may not stand, my head works so Ah, Sir Launcelot, this day have I sore missed thee Alas, that ever I was against thee! for now have I my death"

Then Sir Lucan took up the King the one part, and Sir Bedwere the other part, and in the lifting the King swooned, and Sir Lucan fell in a swoon with the lift. And therewith the noble knight's heart burst. And when the King awoke he beheld Sir Lucan, how he lay foaming at the mouth. "Alas!" said the King, "this is to me a full heavy sight, to see this noble duke so die for my sake; for he would have holpen me that had more need of help than I Alas! he would not complain him, his heart was so set to help me Now Jesu have mercy upon his soul!"

Then Sir Bedwere wept for the death of his brother. "Leave this mourning and weeping," said the King, "for all this will not avail me; for wit thou well, an I

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might live myself the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore, but my time hieth fast," said the King. "Therefore," said Arthur unto Sir Bedwere, "take thou Excalybur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder waterside, and when thou comest there, I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again, and tell me what thou there seest "

"My lord," said Bedwere, "your commandment shall be done, and I shall lightly bring you word again."

So Sir Bedwere departed. And by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and the haft was all of precious stones, and then he said to himself, "If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss " And then Sir Bedwere hid Excalybur under a tree

And so, as soon as he might, he came again unto the King, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword into the water. "What saw thou there?" said the King.

"Sir," he said, "I saw no thing but waves and winds "

"That is untruly said of thee," said the King "Therefore go thou lightly again, and do my commandment, as thou art lief to me and dear, spare not, but throw it in "

Then Sir Bedwere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword, and so eft he hid the sword, and returned again, and told to the King that he had been at the water and done his commandment "What saw thou there?" said the King

"Sir," he said, "I saw no thing but the waters wap and the waves wane."

"Ah, traitor untrue!" said King Arthur, "now thou hast betrayed me twice. Who would have weened that thou that hast been to me so lief and dear, and that art named a noble knight, would betray me for the riches of the sword? But now go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life; for I have taken cold; and but if thou do now as I bid thee, if

## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands; for thou wouldest for my rich sword see me dead."

Then Sir Bedwere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the waterside, and there he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then—he threw the sword as far into the water as he might!

And there came an arm and an hand above the water, and met it, and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished it, and then—vanished away the hand with the sword in the water!

So Sir Bedwere came again to the King, and told him what he saw "Alas!" said the King, "help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried overlong"

Then Sir Bedwere took the King upon his back, and so went with him to that waterside. And when they were at the waterside, even fast by the bank hove a little barge with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur. "Now put me into the barge," said the King. And so he did softly. And there received him three queens with great mourning. And so they set them down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head, and thus that queen said, "Ah, dear brother! why have ye tarried so long from me? Alas! this wound on your head hath caught overmuch cold." And so then they rowed from the land, and Sir Bedwere beheld all the ladies go from him. Then Sir Bedwere cried—"Ah, my lord Arthur! what shall become of me, now ye go from me, and leave me here alone among mine enemies?"

"Comfort thyself," said the King, "and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust to trust in. For I will into the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound. And, if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul."

But ever the queens and ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity to hear. And as soon as Sir Bedwere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

took the forest. And so he went all that night, and in the morning he was ware, betwixt two holts hoar, of a chapel and an hermitage.

Then was Sir Bedwere glad, and thither he went; and, when he came into the chapel, he saw where lay an hermit, grovelling on all four there, fast by a tomb was new graven. When the hermit saw Sir Bedwere he knew him well, for he was but little tofore Bishop of Canterbury that Sir Mordred fleemed "Sir," said Sir Bedwere, "what man is there interred that ye pray so fast for?"

"Fair son," said the hermit, "I wot not verily, but by my deeming. But this night, at midnight, here came a number of ladies, and brought hither a dead corse, and prayed me to bury him, and here they offered an hundred tapers, and they gave me an hundred besants"

"Alas!" said Sir Bedwere, "that was my lord King Arthur that here lieth buried in this chapel"

Then Sir Bedwere swooned, and, when he awoke, he prayed the hermit he might abide with him still there, to live with fasting and prayers "For from hence will I never go," said Sir Bedwere, "by my will; but here to pray all the days of my life for my lord Arthur."

"Ye are welcome to me," said the hermit, "for I know you better than ye ween that I do Ye are the bold Bedwere, and the full noble duke Sir Lucan de Butler was your brother"

Then Sir Bedwere told the hermit all as ye have heard tofore So there 'bode Sir Bedwere with the hermit that was tofore Bishop of Canterbury, and there Sir Bedwere put upon him poor clothes, and served the hermit full lowly in fasting and in prayers

More of the death of King Arthur could I never find but that ladies brought him to his burials, and such one was buried there that the hermit bare witness that sometime was Bishop of Canterbury; but yet the hermit knew not in certain that he was verily the body of King Arthur, for this tale Sir Bedwere, Knight of the Table Round, made it to be written Yet some men say in many parts

## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

of England that King Arthur is not dead, but had, by the will of our Lord Jesu, into another place; and men say that he shall come again, and he shall win the holy cross. I will not say that it shall be so, but rather I will say here in this world he changed his life; but many men say that there is written upon his tomb this verse—

**Hic jacet Arthurus  
Rex quondam rexque futurus.**

### EXERCISES

1 *Archaisms* A large number of simple archaisms appear in Malory's prose. Some are grammatical, as *holpen* for 'helped', others are obsolete words, as *tofore* for 'former', others, again, are archaic expressions, as *thither he went*. Make up lists of archaisms, classified as is suggested above. Give the modern equivalents of the archaisms.

2 *Précis* Summarize the account of the battle.

3 *Style* In his version of *Le Morte D'Arthur*, Tennyson elaborated the simple style of Malory. Here is a passage from Tennyson's poetical rendering. Compare it closely with the corresponding passage from Malory. Observe what Tennyson adds to his original. Add a note on the figures of speech found in each of the corresponding passages.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,  
" Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?  
For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble chance,  
And every chance brought out a noble knight  
Such times have been not since the light that led  
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh  
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved  
Which was an image of the mighty world,  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other minds "

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge  
" The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world  
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
May He within Himself make pure! but thou,  
If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of Wherefore, let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day  
For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?  
For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.  
But now farewell I am going a long way  
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—  
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)  
To the island-valley of Avilion,  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly, but it lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound "

### 4 *Composition*

- (a) Describe another adventure of King Arthur and his Knights  
(b) Describe any other legendary figure, such as Robin Hood

## WILLIAM HAZLITT

### *The Spirit of the Age*

WILLIAM HAZLITT (1778-1830) was an important member of the group of essayists and men of letters that flourished at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He was a man of advanced political views and was not backward in expressing them. In a similar fashion his frank opinions of literary work were apt to give offence. On the literary side, his volume called *The Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (1817) is typical of his best work, while *The Spirit of the Age* (1825) is a volume of representative essays on literary and general topics.

The following essay is a good example of his treatment of a topic of general interest.



## ON A SUN-DIAL

**H**ORAS *non numero nisi serenas* is the motto of a sun-dial near Venice. There is a softness and a harmony in the words and in the thought unparalleled. Of all conceits it is surely the most classical. "I count only the hours that are serene." What a bland and care-dispelling feeling! How the shadows seem to fade on the dial-plate as the sky lours, and time presents only a blank unless as its progress is marked by what is joyous, and all that is not happy sinks into oblivion! What a fine lesson is conveyed to the mind—to take no note of time but by its benefits, to watch only for the smiles and neglect the frowns of fate, to compose our lives of bright and gentle moments, turning always to the sunny side of things, and letting the rest slip from our imaginations, unheeded or forgotten! How different from the common art of self-tormenting!

For myself, as I rode along the *Brenta*, while the sun shone hot upon its sluggish, slimy waves, my sensations were far from comfortable, but the reading this inscription on the side of a glaring wall in an instant restored me to myself; and still, whenever I think of or repeat it, it has the power of wafting me into the region of pure and blissful abstraction. I cannot help fancying it to be a legend of Popish superstition. Some monk of the Dark Ages must have invented and bequeathed it to us, who, loitering in trim gardens and watching the silent march of time, as his fruits ripened in the sun or his flowers scented the balmy air, felt a mild languor pervade his senses, and having little to do or to care for determined (in imitation of his sun-dial) to efface that little

## ON A SUN-DIAL

from his thoughts or draw a veil over it, making of his life one long dream of quiet! *Horas non numero nisi serenas* he might repeat, when the heavens were overcast and the gathering storm scattered the falling leaves, and turn to his books and wrap himself in his golden studies! Out of some such mood of mind, indolent, elegant, thoughtful, this exquisite device (speaking volumes) must have originated.

Of the several modes of counting time, that by the sun-dial is perhaps the most apposite and striking, if not the most convenient or comprehensive. It does not obtrude its observations, though it "morals on the time," and by its stationary character, forms a contrast to the most fleeting of all essences. It stands *sub dio*—under the marble air, and there is some connexion between the image of infinity and eternity. I should also like to have a sun-flower growing near it with bees fluttering round. It should be of iron to denote duration, and have a dull, leaden look. I hate a sun-dial made of wood, which is rather calculated to show the variations of the seasons than the progress of time, slow, silent, imperceptible, chequered with light and shade. If our hours were all serene, we might probably take almost as little note of them as the dial does of those that are clouded. It is the shadow thrown across that gives us warning of their flight. Otherwise, our impressions would take the same undistinguishable hue, we should scarce be conscious of our existence. Those who have had none of the cares of this life to harass and disturb them have been obliged to have recourse to the hopes and fears of the next to vary the prospect before them.

Most of the methods for measuring the lapse of time have, I believe, been the contrivance of monks and religious recluses, who, finding time hang heavy on their hands, were at some pains to see how they got rid of it. The hour-glass is, I suspect, an older invention, and it is certainly the most defective of all. Its creeping sands are not indeed an unapt emblem of the minute, countless

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

portions of our existence; and the manner in which they gradually slide through the hollow glass and diminish in number till not a single one is left also illustrates the way in which our years slip from us by stealth: but as a mechanical invention it is rather a hindrance than a help, for it requires to have the time, of which it pretends to count the precious moments, taken up in attention to itself, and in seeing that when one end of the glass is empty, we turn it round, in order that it may go on again, or else all our labour is lost, and we must wait for some other mode of ascertaining the time before we can recover our reckoning and proceed as before.

The philosopher in his cell, the cottager at her spinning-wheel must, however, find an invaluable acquisition in this "companion of the lonely hour," as it has been called, which not only serves to tell how the time goes, but to fill up its vacancies. What a treasure must not the little box seem to hold, as if it were a sacred deposit of the very grains and fleeting sands of life! What a business, in lieu of other more important avocations, to see it out to the last sand, and then to renew the process again on the instant, that there may not be the least flaw or error in the account! What a strong sense must be brought home to the mind of the value and irrecoverable nature of the time that is fled; what a thrilling, incessant consciousness of the slippery tenure by which we hold what remains of it! Our very existence must seem crumbling to atoms, and running down (without a miraculous reprieve) to the last fragment. "Dust to dust and ashes to ashes" is a text that might be fairly inscribed on an hour-glass: it is ordinarily associated with the scythe of Time and a Death's-head as a *memento mori*; and has, no doubt, furnished many a tacit hint to the apprehensive and visionary enthusiast in favour of a resurrection to another life!

The French give a different turn to things, less sombre and less edifying. A common and also a very pleasing ornament to a clock, in Paris, is a figure of Time seated

## ON A SUN-DIAL

in a boat which Cupid is rowing along, with the motto, *L'Amour fait passer le Temps*—which the wits again have travestied into *Le Temps fait passer l'Amour*. All this is ingenious and well; but it wants sentiment. I like a people who have something that they love and something that they hate, and with whom everything is not alike a matter of indifference or *pour passer le temps*. The French attach no importance to anything, except for the moment; they are only thinking how they shall get rid of one sensation for another, all their ideas are *in transitu*. Everything is detached, nothing is accumulated. It would be a million of years before a Frenchman would think of the *Horas non numero nisi serenas*. Its impassioned repose and *ideal* voluptuousness are as far from their breasts as the poetry of that line in Shakespeare—"How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!" They never arrive at the classical—or the romantic. They blow the bubbles of vanity, fashion, and pleasure; but they do not expand their perceptions into refinement, or strengthen them into solidity. Where there is nothing fine in the groundwork of the imagination, nothing fine in the superstructure can be produced. They are light, airy, fanciful (to give them their due)—but when they attempt to be serious (beyond mere good sense) they are either dull or extravagant. When the volatile salt has flown off, nothing but a *caput mortuum* remains. They have infinite crotchets and caprices with their clocks and watches, which seem made for anything but to tell the hour—gold repeaters, watches with metal covers, clocks with hands to count the seconds. There is no escaping from quackery and impertinence, even in our attempts to calculate the waste of time. The years gallop fast enough for me, without remarking every moment as it flies; and further, I must say I dislike a watch (whether of French or English manufacture) that comes to me like a footpad with its face muffled, and does not present its clear, open aspect like a friend and point with its finger to the time of day. All this opening and shutting of dull, heavy cases (under

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

pretence that the glass lid is liable to be broken, or lets in the dust or air and obstructs the movements of the watch) is not to husband time, but to give trouble. It is mere pomposity and self-importance, like consulting a mysterious oracle that one carries about with one in one's pocket, instead of asking a common question of an acquaintance or companion.

There are two clocks which strike the hour in the room where I am. This I do not like. In the first place, I do not want to be reminded twice how the time goes (it is like the second tap of a saucy servant at your door when perhaps you have no wish to get up) in the next place, it is starting a difference of opinion on the subject, and I am averse to every appearance of wrangling and disputation. Time moves on the same, whatever disparity there may be in our mode of keeping count of it, like true fame in spite of the cavils and contradictions of the critics.

I am no friend to repeating watches. The only pleasant association I have with them is the account given by Rousseau of some French lady who sat up reading the *New Eloise* when it first came out, and ordering her maid to sound the repeater found it was too late to go to bed, and continued reading on till morning. Yet how different is the interest excited by this story from the account which Rousseau somewhere else gives of his sitting up with his father reading romances when a boy till they were startled by the swallows twittering in their nests at daybreak, and the father cried out, half angry and ashamed, "*Allons, mon fils, je suis plus enfant que toi!*" In general, I have heard repeating watches sounded in stage coaches at night, when some fellow-traveller suddenly awaking and wondering what was the hour, another has very deliberately taken out his watch, and pressing the spring, it has counted out the time, each petty stroke acting like a sharp puncture on the ear, and informing me of the dreary hours I had already passed, and of the more dreary ones I had to wait till morning.

## ON A SUN-DIAL

### EXERCISES

1. *Essay-method* The literary essay, as practised by Charles Lamb (see p 147) and Hazlitt, had two main features: (a) it had no regular sequence, but rambled on, (b) it was largely personal, expressing recollections and predilections. Summarize this essay, trying to show how far Hazlitt kept to the method.

2. *Vocabulary* Use the following words in sentences of your own.

unparalleled, conceits, oblivion, abstraction, languor; exquisite, stationary, imperceptible, chequered, undistinguishable, avocations, irrecoverable, visionary, travestied, voluptuousness, extravagant, quackery, deliberately

3. *Interpretation* Take the paragraph beginning, "Most of the methods" (p 227)

(a) Express the main idea simply and briefly

(b) Analyse the last sentence

4. *Composition*

(a) Describe methods of measuring time

(b) Write an essay on "An Old-world Garden."

## O. HENRY

### *The Last Leaf*

O. HENRY (1862-1910) is the pen-name adopted by WILLIAM S. PORTER, who was born in North Carolina. In his early years he had a varied career, finally obtaining a post as cashier in a bank in Texas. Unfortunately he took to embezzling the bank funds, and in 1898 he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in Ohio penitentiary. While in prison he wrote those short stories which gave him a wide notoriety, so much so that, on regaining his liberty, he was offered an important post in a New York journal. Henceforth he was a busy and successful writer; and now he ranks high among American authors.

He specialized in the short story. He has the knack of making much of trivial incidents and of working up the theme into a brilliant and unexpected climax. His style is always clear and readable—the model of the short-story style.

## THE LAST LEAF

**I**N a little district west of Washington Square the streets have run crazy and broken themselves into small strips called 'places' These 'places' make strange angles and curves One street crosses itself a time or two An artist once discovered a valuable possibility in this street Suppose a collector with a bill for paints, paper and canvas should, in traversing this route, suddenly meet himself coming back, without a cent having been paid on account!

So, to quaint old Greenwich Village the art people soon came prowling, hunting for north windows and eighteenth-century gables and Dutch attics and low rents. Then they imported some pewter mugs and a chafing dish or two from Sixth Avenue, and became a 'colony'

At the top of a squatty, three-story brick Sue and Johnsy had their studio 'Johnsy' was familiar for Joanna One was from Maine: the other from California. They had met at the *table d'hôte* of an Eighth Street "Delmonico's," and found their tastes in art, chicory salad and bishop sleeves so congenial that the joint studio resulted

That was in May In November a cold, unseen stranger, whom the doctors called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching one here and there with his icy finger. Over on the East Side this ravager strode boldly, smiting his victims by scores, but his feet trod slowly through the maze of the narrow and moss-grown 'places.'

Mr Pneumonia was not what you would call a chivalric old gentleman. A mite of a little woman with blood thinned by Californian zephyrs was hardly fair game for



## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

the red-fisted, short-breathed old duffer. But Johnsy he smote; and she lay, scarcely moving, on her painted iron bedstead, looking through the small Dutch window-panes at the blank side of the next brick house.

One morning the busy doctor invited Sue into the hallway with a shaggy, grey eyebrow

"She has one chance in—let us say, ten," he said, as he shook down the mercury in his clinical thermometer. "And that chance is for her to want to live. This way people have of lining-up on the side of the undertaker makes the entire pharmacopœia look silly. Your little lady has made up her mind that she's not going to get well. Has she anything on her mind?"

"She—she wanted to paint the Bay of Naples some day," said Sue

"Paint?—bosh! Has she anything on her mind worth thinking about twice—a man, for instance?"

"A man?" said Sue, with a jews'-harp twang in her voice. "Is a man worth—but, no, doctor; there is nothing of the kind."

"Well, it is the weakness, then," said the doctor. "I will do all that science, so far as it may filter through my efforts, can accomplish. But whenever my patient begins to count the carriages in her funeral procession I subtract fifty per cent. from the curative power of medicines. If you will get her to ask one question about the new winter styles in cloak sleeves I will promise you a one-in-five chance for her, instead of one in ten."

After the doctor had gone, Sue went into the work-room and cried a Japanese napkin to a pulp. Then she swaggered into Johnsy's room with her drawing-board, whistling ragtime.

Johnsy lay, scarcely making a ripple under the bed-clothes, with her face towards the window. Sue stopped whistling, thinking she was asleep.

She arranged her board and began a pen-and-ink drawing to illustrate a magazine story. Young artists must pave their way to Art by drawing pictures for

## THE LAST LEAF

magazine stories that young authors write to pave their way to Literature.

As Sue was sketching a pair of elegant horse-show riding trousers and a monocle on the figure of the hero, an Idaho cowboy, she heard a low sound, several times repeated. She went quickly to the bedside.

Johnsy's eyes were open wide. She was looking out the window and counting—counting backward.

"Twelve," she said, and a little later, "eleven"; and then "ten," and "nine", and then "eight" and "seven," almost together.

Sue looked solicitously out the window. What was there to count? There was only a bare, dreary yard to be seen, and the blank side of the brick house twenty feet away. An old, old ivy vine, gnarled and decayed at the roots, climbed half-way up the brick wall. The cold breath of autumn had stricken its leaves from the vine until its skeleton branches clung, almost bare, to the crumbling bricks.

"What is it, dear?" asked Sue.

"Six," said Johnsy, in almost a whisper. "They're falling faster now. Three days ago there were almost a hundred. It made my head ache to count them. But now it's easy. There goes another one. There are only five left now."

"Five what, dear? Tell your Sudie."

"Leaves. On the ivy vine. When the last one falls I must go too. I've known that for three days. Didn't the doctor tell you?"

"Oh, I never heard of such nonsense," complained Sue, with magnificent scorn. "What have old ivy leaves to do with your getting well? And you used to love that vine so, you naughty girl. Don't be a goosey. Why, the doctor told me this morning that your chances for getting well real soon were—let's see exactly what he said—he said the chances were ten to one! Why, that's almost as good a chance as we have in New York when we ride on the street-car or walk past a new building. Try to

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

take some broth now, and let Sudie go back to her drawing, so she can sell the editor man with it, and buy port wine for her sick child, and pork chops for her greedy self "

" You needn't get any more wine," said Johnsy, keeping her eyes fixed out the window.

" There goes another. No, I don't want any broth. That leaves just four I want to see the last one fall before it gets dark Then I'll go too "

" Johnsy, dear," said Sue, bending over her, " will you promise me to keep your eyes closed, and not look out of the window until I am done working? I must hand those drawings in by to-morrow I need the light or I would draw the shade down "

" Couldn't you draw in the other room? " asked Johnsy coldly

" I'd rather be here by you," said Sue " Besides, I don't want you to keep looking at those silly ivy leaves "

" Tell me as soon as you have finished," said Johnsy, closing her eyes, and lying white and still as a fallen statue, " because I want to see the last one fall I'm tired of waiting I'm tired of thinking. I want to turn loose my hold on everything, and go sailing down, down, just like one of those poor, tired leaves."

" Try to sleep," said Sue. " I must call Behrman up to be my model for the old hermit miner. I'll not be gone a minute Don't try to move till I come back "

Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor beneath them He was past sixty and had a Michelangelo's Moses beard curling down from the head of a satyr along the body of an imp Behrman was a failure in art. Forty years he had wielded the brush without getting near enough to touch the hem of his Mistress's robe. He had been always about to paint a masterpiece, but had never yet begun it. For several years he had painted nothing except now and then a daub in the line of commerce or advertising. He earned a little by serving

as a model to those young artists in the colony who could not pay the price of a professional. He drank gin to excess, and still talked of his coming masterpiece. For the rest he was a fierce little old man, who scoffed terribly at softness in any one, and who regarded himself as especial mastiff-in-waiting to protect the two young artists in the studio above.

Sue found Behrman smelling strongly of juniper berries in his dimly lighted den below. In one corner was a blank canvas on an easel that had been waiting there for twenty-five years to receive the first line of the masterpiece. She told him of Johnsy's fancy, and how she feared she would, indeed, light and fragile as a leaf herself, float away when her slight hold upon the world grew weaker.

Old Behrman, with his red eyes plainly streaming, shouted his contempt and derision for such idiotic imaginings.

"Vass!" he cried. "Is dere people in de world mit der foolishness to die because leafs dey drop off from a confounded vine? I haf not heard of such a thing. No, I vill not bese as a model for your fool hermit-dunder-head. Vy do you allow dot silly pusiness to come in der prain of her? Ach, dot poor little Miss Yohnsy."

"She is very ill and weak," said Sue, "and the fever has left her mind morbid and full of strange fancies. Very well, Mr Behrman, if you do not care to pose for me, you needn't. But I think you are a horrid old—old flibberti-gibbet."

"You are just like a woman!" yelled Behrman. "Who said I vill not bese? Go on. I come mit you. For half an hour I haf been trying to say dot I am ready to bese. Gott! dis is not any place in which one so goot as Miss Yohnsy shall lie sick. Some day I vill baint a masterpiece, and ve shall all go away. Gott! yes."

Johnsy was sleeping when they went upstairs. Sue pulled the shade down to the window-sill and motioned

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

Behrman into the other room. In there they peered out the window fearfully at the ivy vine. Then they looked at each other for a moment without speaking. A persistent, cold rain was falling, mingled with snow. Behrman, in his old blue shirt, took his seat as the hermit-miner on an upturned kettle for a rock.

When Sue awoke from an hour's sleep the next morning she found Johnsy with dull, wide-open eyes staring at the drawn green shade.

"Pull it up! I want to see," she ordered, in a whisper.

Wearily Sue obeyed.

But, lo! after the beating rain and fierce gusts of wind that had endured through the livelong night, there yet stood out against the brick wall one ivy leaf. It was the last on the vine. Still dark green near its stem, but with its serrated edges tinted with the yellow of dissolution and decay, it hung bravely from a branch some twenty feet above the ground.

"It is the last one," said Johnsy. "I thought it would surely fall during the night. I heard the wind. It will fall to-day, and I shall die at the same time."

"Dear, dear!" said Sue, leaning her worn face down to the pillow; "think of me, if you won't think of yourself. What would I do?"

But Johnsy did not answer. The loneliest thing in all the world is a soul when it is making ready to go on its mysterious, far journey. The fancy seemed to possess her more strongly as one by one the ties that bound her to friendship and to earth were loosed.

The day wore away, and even through the twilight they could see the lone ivy leaf clinging to its stem against the wall. And then, with the coming of the night the north wind was again loosed, while the rain still beat against the windows and pattered down from the low Dutch eaves.

When it was light enough Johnsy, the merciless, commanded that the shade be raised.

The ivy leaf was still there.

## THE LAST LEAF

Johnsy lay for a long time looking at it. And then she called to Sue, who was stirring her chicken broth over the gas stove.

"I've been a bad girl, Sudie," said Johnsy. "Something has made that last leaf stay there to show me how wicked I was. It is a sin to want to die. You may bring me a little broth now, and some milk with a little port in it, and—no, bring me a hand-mirror first; and then pack some pillows about me, and I will sit up and watch you cook."

An hour later she said—

"Sudie, some day I hope to paint the Bay of Naples."

The doctor came in the afternoon, and Sue had an excuse to go into the hallway as he left.

"Even chances," said the doctor, taking Sue's thin, shaking hand in his. "With good nursing you'll win. And now I must see another case I have downstairs. Behrman, his name is—some kind of an artist, I believe. Pneumonia, too. He is an old, weak man, and the attack is acute. There is no hope for him; but he goes to the hospital to-day to be made more comfortable."

The next day the doctor said to Sue "She's out of danger. You've won. Nutrition and care now—that's all."

And that afternoon Sue came to the bed where Johnsy lay, contentedly knitting a very blue and very useless woollen shoulder scarf, and put one arm around her, pillows and all.

"I have something to tell you, white mouse," she said. "Mr Behrman died of pneumonia to-day in hospital. He was ill only two days. The janitor found him on the morning of the first day in his room downstairs helpless with pain. His shoes and clothing were wet through and icy cold. They couldn't imagine where he had been on such a dreadful night. And then they found a lantern, still lighted, and a ladder that had been dragged from its place, and some scattered brushes, and a palette with green and yellow colours mixed on it, and—look out

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

the window, dear, at the last ivy leaf on the wall. Didn't you wonder why it never fluttered or moved when the wind blew? Ah, darling, it's Behrman's masterpiece—he painted it there the night that the last leaf fell ”

## A. W. KINGLAKE

### *Eothen*

ALEXANDER WILLIAM KINGLAKE (1809-91) was a barrister, but his activities were chiefly literary. For some time he travelled in the East, and he recorded his experiences in his book called *Eothen* (1844), which is a Greek word meaning 'from the east'. The reputation gained by this travel-book obtained for him the post of war-correspondent to *The Times*, when war broke out in the Crimea in 1854. This gave rise to his huge work, *The Invasion of the Crimea*, which appeared between the years 1863 and 1887.

Our extract is from *Eothen*. It is a typical example of his fine descriptive style and vigorous narrative.



## CAIRO TO SUEZ

THE 'dromedary' of Egypt and Syria is not the two-humped animal described by that name in books of natural history, but is, in fact, of the same family as the camel, to which it stands in about the same relation as a racer to a cart-horse. The fleetness and endurance of this creature are extraordinary. It is not usual to force him into a gallop, and I fancy from his make that it would be quite impossible for him to maintain that pace for any length of time, but the animal is on so large a scale, that the jog-trot at which he is generally ridden implies a progress of perhaps ten or twelve miles an hour, and this pace, it is said, he can keep up incessantly, without food, or water, or rest, for three whole days and nights.

Of the two dromedaries which I had obtained for this journey, I mounted one myself, and put Dthemetri on the other. My plan was to ride on with Dthemetri to Suez as rapidly as the fleetness of the beasts would allow, and to let Mysseri (who was still weak from the effects of his late illness) come quietly on with the camels and baggage.

The trot of the dromedary is a pace terribly disagreeable to the rider, until he becomes a little accustomed to it, but after the first half-hour I so far schooled myself to this new exercise, that I felt capable of keeping it up (though not without aching limbs) for several hours together. Now, therefore, I was anxious to dart forward, and annihilate at once the whole space that divided me from the Red Sea. Dthemetri, however, could not get on at all. Every attempt which he made to trot seemed to threaten the utter dislocation of his whole frame, and indeed I doubt whether any one of Dthemetri's age (nearly forty,

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I think), and unaccustomed to such exercise, could have borne it at all easily; besides, the dromedary which fell to his lot was evidently a very bad one; he every now and then came to a dead stop, and coolly knelt down, as though suggesting that the rider had better get off at once and abandon the attempt as one that was utterly hopeless.

When for the third or fourth time I saw Dthemetri thus planted, I lost my patience, and went on without him. For about two hours, I think, I advanced without once looking behind me. I then paused, and cast my eyes back to the western horizon. There was no sign of Dthemetri, nor of any other living creature. This I expected, for I knew that I must have far out-distanced all my followers. I had ridden away from my party merely by way of gratifying my impatience, and with the intention of stopping as soon as I felt tired, until I was overtaken. I now observed, however (this I had not been able to do whilst advancing so rapidly), that the track which I had been following was seemingly the track of only one or two camels. I did not fear that I had diverged very largely from the true route, but still I could not feel any reasonable certainty that my party would follow any line of march within sight of me.

I had to consider, therefore, whether I should remain where I was, upon the chance of seeing my people come up, or whether I would push on alone, and find my way to Suez. I had now learned that I could not rely upon the continued guidance of any track, but I knew that (if maps were right) the point for which I was bound bore just due east of Cairo, and I thought that, although I might miss the line leading most directly to Suez, I could not well fail to find my way sooner or later to the Red Sea. The worst of it was that I had no provision of food or water with me, and already I was beginning to feel thirst. I deliberated for a minute, and then determined that I would abandon all hope of seeing my party again in the Desert, and would push forward as rapidly as possible towards Suez.

It was not, I confess, without a sensation of awe that

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I swept with my sight the vacant round of the horizon, and remembered that I was all alone, and unprovisioned in the midst of the arid waste; but this very awe gave tone and zest to the exultation with which I felt myself launched. Hitherto, in all my wandering, I had been under the care of other people—sailors, Tatars, guides, and dragomen had watched over my welfare, but now at last I was here in this African desert, and I *myself, and no other, had charge of my life*. I liked the office well. I had the greatest part of the day before me, a very fair dromedary, a fur pelisse, and a brace of pistols, but no bread and no water; for that I must ride—and ride I did.

For several hours I urged forward my beast at a rapid though steady pace, but now the pangs of thirst began to torment me. I did not relax my pace, however, and I had not suffered long when a moving object appeared in the distance before me. The intervening space was soon traversed, and I found myself approaching a Bedouin Arab mounted on a camel, attended by another Bedouin on foot. They stopped. I saw that, as usual, there hung from the pack-saddle of the camel a large skin water-flask, which seemed to be well filled. I steered my dromedary close up alongside of the mounted Bedouin, caused my beast to kneel down, then alighted, and keeping the end of the halter in my hand, went up to the mounted Bedouin without speaking, took hold of his water-flask, opened it, and drank long and deep from its leathern lips. Both of the Bedouins stood fast in amazement and mute horror; and really, if they had never happened to see an European before, the apparition was enough to startle them. To see for the first time a coat and a waistcoat, with the semblance of a white human head at the top, and for this ghastly figure to come swiftly out of the horizon upon a fleet dromedary, approach them silently and with a demoniacal smile, and drink a deep draught from their water-flask—this was enough to make the Bedouins stare a little; they, in fact, stared a great deal—not as Europeans stare, with a restless and puzzled expression of counten-

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ance, but with features all fixed and rigid, and with still, glassy eyes. Before they had time to get decomposed from their state of petrification I had remounted my dromedary, and was darting away towards the east.

Without pause or remission of pace I continued to press forward, but after a while I found to my confusion that the slight track which had hitherto guided me now failed altogether. I began to fear that I must have been all along following the course of some wandering Bedouins, and I felt that if this were the case, my fate was a little uncertain.

I had no compass with me, but I determined upon the eastern point of the horizon as accurately as I could by reference to the sun, and so laid down for myself a way over the pathless sands.

But now my poor dromedary, by whose life and strength I held my own, began to show signs of distress. a thick, clammy, and glutinous kind of foam gathered about her lips, and piteous sobs burst from her bosom in the tones of human misery. I doubted for a moment whether I would give her a little rest, a relaxation of pace, but I decided that I would not, and continued to push forward as steadily as before.

The character of the country became changed. I had ridden away from the level tracts, and before me now, and on either side, there were vast hills of sand and calcined rocks, that interrupted my progress and baffled my doubtful road, but I did my best. With rapid steps I swept round the base of the hills, threaded the winding hollows, and at last, as I rose in my swift course to the crest of a lofty ridge, *Thalatta! Thalatta!* by Jove! I saw the sea!

My tongue can tell where to find a clue to many an old pagan creed, because that (distinctly from all mere admiration of the beauty belonging to nature's works) I acknowledge a sense of mystical reverence when first I look, to see some illustrious feature of the globe—some coast-line of ocean, some mighty river or dreary mountain range, the ancient barrier of kingdoms. But the Red Sea! It might well claim my earnest gaze by force of the great Jewish

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migration which connects it with the history of our own religion. From this very ridge, it is likely enough, the panting Israelites first saw that shining inlet of the sea. Ay! ay! but moreover, and best of all, that beckoning sea assured my eyes, and proved how well I had marked out the east for my path, and gave me good promise that sooner or later the time would come for me to rest and drink. It was distant, the sea, but I felt my own strength, and I had *heard* of the strength of dromedaries. I pushed forward as eagerly as though I had spoiled the Egyptians and were flying from Pharaoh's police.

I had not yet been able to discover any symptoms of Suez, but after a while I descried in the distance a large, blank, isolated building. I made towards this, and in time got down to it. The building was a fort, and had been built there for the protection of a well which it contained within its precincts. A cluster of small huts adhered to the fort, and in a short time I was receiving the hospitality of the inhabitants, who were grouped upon the sands near their hamlet. To quench the fires of my throat with about a gallon of muddy water, and to swallow a little of the food placed before me, was the work of few minutes, and before the astonishment of my hosts had even begun to subside, I was pursuing my onward journey. Suez, I found, was still three hours distant, and the sun going down in the west warned me that I must find some other guide to keep me in the right direction. This guide I found in the most fickle and uncertain of the elements. For some hours the wind had been freshening, and it now blew a violent gale, it blew not fitfully and in squalls, but with such remarkable steadiness, that I felt convinced it would blow from the same quarter for several hours. When the sun set, therefore, I carefully looked for the point from which the wind was blowing, and found that it came from the very west, and was blowing exactly in the direction of my route. I had nothing to do therefore but to go straight to leeward, and this was not difficult, for the gale blew with such immense force, that if I diverged at all from its line I

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instantly felt the pressure of the blast on the side towards which I was deviating. Very soon after sunset there came on complete darkness, but the strong wind guided me well, and sped me, too, on my way

I had pushed on for about, I think, a couple of hours after nightfall when I saw the glimmer of a light in the distance, and this I ventured to hope must be Suez. Upon approaching it, however, I found that it was only a solitary fort, and I passed on without stopping

On I went, still riding down the wind, when an unlucky accident occurred, for which, if you like, you can have your laugh against me. I have told you already what sort of lodging it is that you have upon the back of a camel. You ride the dromedary in the same fashion, you are perched rather than seated on a bunch of carpets or quilts upon the summit of the hump. It happened that my dromedary veered rather suddenly from her onward course. Meeting the movement, I mechanically turned my left wrist as though I were holding a bridle rein, for the complete darkness prevented my eyes from reminding me that I had nothing but a halter in my hand. The expected resistance failed, for the halter was hanging upon that side of the dromedary's neck towards which I was slightly leaning. I toppled over, head foremost, and then went falling and falling through air, till my crown came whang against the ground. And the ground too was perfectly hard (compacted sand), but the thickly wadded headgear which I wore for protection against the sun saved my life. The notion of my being able to get up again after falling head-foremost from such an immense height seemed to me at first too paradoxical to be acted upon, but I soon found that I was not a bit hurt. My dromedary utterly vanished. I looked round me, and saw the glimmer of a light in the fort which I had lately passed, and I began to work my way back in that direction. The violence of the gale made it hard for me to force my way towards the west, but I succeeded at last in regaining the fort. To this, as to the other fort which I had passed, there was

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attached a cluster of huts, and I soon found myself surrounded by a group of villainous, gloomy-looking fellows. It was a horrid bore for me to have to swagger and look big at a time when I felt so particularly small on account of my tumble and my lost dromedary; but there was no help for it, I had no Dthemetri now to 'strike terror' for me. I knew hardly one word of Arabic, but somehow or other I contrived to announce it as my absolute will and pleasure that these fellows should find me the means of gaining Suez. They acceded, and having a donkey, they saddled it for me, and appointed one of their number to attend me on foot.

I afterwards found that these fellows were not Arabs, but Algerine refugees, and that they bore the character of being sad scoundrels. They justified this imputation to some extent on the following day. They allowed Mysseri with my baggage and the camels to pass unmolested, but an Arab lad belonging to the party happened to lag a little way in the rear, and him (if they were not maligned) these rascals stripped and robbed. Low indeed is the state of bandit morality when men will allow the sleek traveller with well-laden camels to pass in quiet, reserving their spirit of enterprise for the tattered turban of a miserable boy.

I reached Suez at last. The British agent, though roused from his midnight sleep, received me in his home with the utmost kindness and hospitality. Oh! by Jove, how delightful it was to lie on fair sheets, and to dally with sleep, and to wake, and to sleep, and to wake once more, for the sake of sleeping again!

### EXERCISES

1. *Vocabulary* Find the derivation and meaning of each of the following words

dromedary, incessantly, annihilate; dislocation; gratifying, deliberated, welfare, demoniacal, remission, glutinous; calcined, symptoms; adhered, elements; leeward; deviating, solitary; immense, villainous, acceded; imputation.

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### 2. *Grammar.* Sentences to be analysed :

- (a) Every attempt . . . (P 242 )
- (b) It was not . . . (P 243 )
- (c) I had nothing to do . . . (P 246 )

### 3 *Interpretation* Take the paragraph beginning, " My tongue can tell " (p. 245)

- (a) Rewrite in third person, in simple style
- (b) What is the " Jewish migration " referred to ?
- (c) What is the reference in the last sentence ?
- (d) Analyse the first sentence.

### 4 *Composition*

- (a) Write an essay on " The Ship of the Desert "
- (b) Describe a visit to the Zoo
- (c) Write a story connected with the desert



## ARNOLD BENNETT

### *Anna of the Five Towns*

ARNOLD BENNETT (1867-1931) was born near Hanley, in the Pottery district, and his best work deals with the 'Five Towns' (Burslem, Hanley, Stoke, Fenton, and Longton), which are mainly engaged in pottery. Such novels are *Anna of the Five Towns* (1902), *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908), and *Clayhanger* (1910).

The following pages are from *Anna of the Five Towns*. The passage shows how freely and graphically Bennett can bring before his reader the scene he is describing.

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**P**ROBABLY no one in the Five Towns takes a conscious pride in the antiquity of the potter's craft, nor in its unique and intimate relation to human life, alike civilized and uncivilized. Man hardened clay into a bowl before he spun flax and made a garment, and the last lone man will want an earthen vessel after he has abandoned his ruined house for a cave, and his woven rags for an animal's skin. This supremacy of the most ancient of crafts is in the secret nature of things, and cannot be explained. History begins long after the period when Bursley was first the central seat of that honoured manufacture, it is the central seat still—"the mother of the Five Towns," in our local phrase—and though the townsmen, absorbed in a strenuous daily struggle, may forget their heirship to an unbroken tradition of countless centuries, the seal of their venerable calling is upon their foreheads. If no other relic of an immemorial past is to be seen in these modernized sordid streets, there is at least the living legacy of that extraordinary kinship between workman and work, that instinctive mastery of clay which the past has bestowed upon the present. The horse is less to the Arab than clay is to the Bursley man. He exists in it and by it, it fills his lungs and blanches his cheek; it keeps him alive and it kills him. His fingers close round it as round the hand of a friend. He knows all its tricks and aptitudes; when to coax and when to force it, when to rely on it and when to distrust it. The weavers of Lancashire have dubbed him with an epithet on account of it, an epithet whose hasty use has led to many a fight, but nothing could be more illuminatively descriptive than

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that epithet, which names his vocation in terms of another vocation. A dozen decades of applied science have of course resulted in the interposition of elaborate machinery between the clay and the man, but no great vulgar handicraft has lost less of the human than potting. Clay is always clay, and the steam-driven contrivance that will mould a basin while a man sits and watches has yet to be invented. Moreover, if in some coarser process the hands are superseded, the number of processes has been multiplied tenfold, the ware in which six men formerly collaborated is now produced by sixty, and thus, in one sense, the touch of finger on clay is more pervasive than ever before.

Mynors' works was acknowledged to be one of the best, of its size, in the district—a model three-oven bank, and it must be remembered that of the hundreds of banks in the Five Towns the vast majority are small, like this—the large manufactory with its corps of jacket-men,<sup>1</sup> one of whom is detached to show visitors round so much of the works as is deemed advisable for them to see, is the exception. Mynors paid three hundred pounds a year in rent, and produced nearly three hundred pounds' worth of work a week. He was his own manager, and there was only one jacket-man on the place, a clerk at eighteen shillings. He employed about a hundred hands, and devoted all his ingenuity to prevent that wastage which is at once the easiest to overlook and the most difficult to check—the wastage of labour. No pains were spared to keep all departments in full and regular activity, and owing to his judicious firmness the feast of St Monday, that canker eternally eating at the root of the prosperity of the Five Towns, was less religiously observed on his bank than perhaps anywhere else in Bursley. He had realized that when a workshop stands empty the employer has not only ceased to make money, but has begun to lose it. The archi-

<sup>1</sup> *Jacket-man* the artisan's satiric term for any one who does not work in shirt-sleeves, who is not actually a producer, such as a clerk or a pretentious foreman

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tect of "Providence Works" (Providence stands god-father to many commercial enterprises in the Five Towns) knew his business and the business of the potter, and he had designed the works with a view to the strictest economy of labour. The various shops were so arranged that in the course of its metamorphosis the clay travelled naturally in a circle from the slip-house by the canal to the packing-house by the canal: there was no carrying to and fro. The steam installation was complete: steam once generated had no respite; after it had exhausted itself in vitalizing fifty machines, it was killed by inches in order to dry the unfired ware and warm the dinners of the work-people.

Henry took Anna to the canal-entrance, because the buildings looked best from that side.

"Now how much is a crate worth?" she asked, pointing to a crate which was being swung on a crane direct from the packing-house into a boat.

"That?" Mynors answered. "A crateful of ware may be worth anything. At Minton's I have seen a crate worth three hundred pounds. But that one there is only worth eight or nine pounds. You see, you and I make cheap stuff."

"But don't you make any really good pots—are they all cheap?"

"All cheap," he said.

"I suppose that's business?" He detected a note of regret in her voice.

"I don't know," he said, with the slightest impatient warmth. "We make the stuff as good as we can for the money. We supply what every one wants. Don't you think it's better to please a thousand folks than to please ten? I like to feel that my ware is used all over the country and the colonies. I would sooner do as I do than make swagger ware for a handful of rich people."

"Oh, yes," she exclaimed, eagerly accepting the point of view. "I quite agree with you." She had never heard him in that vein before, and was struck by his enthusiasm.

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And Mynors was in fact always very enthusiastic concerning the virtues of the general markets. He had no sympathy with specialities, artistic or otherwise. He found his satisfaction in honestly meeting the public taste. He was born to be a manufacturer of cheap goods on a colossal scale. He could dream of fifty ovens, and his ambition blinded him to the present absurdity of talking about a three-oven bank spreading its productions all over the country and the colonies, it did not occur to him that there were yet scarcely enough plates to go round.

"I suppose we had better start at the start," he said, leading the way to the slip-house. He did not need to be told that Anna was perfectly ignorant of the craft of pottery, and that every detail of it, so stale to him, would acquire freshness under her naive and inquiring gaze.

In the slip-house begins the long manipulation which transforms raw, porous, friable clay into the moulded, decorated, and glazed vessel. The large whitewashed place was occupied by ungainly machines and receptacles through which the four sorts of clay used in the common 'body'—ball clay, China clay, flint clay, and stone clay—were compelled to pass before they became a white putty-like mixture meet for shaping by human hands. The blunger crushed the clay, the sifter extracted the iron from it by means of a magnet, the press expelled the water, and the pug-mill expelled the air. From the last reluctant mouth slowly emerged a solid stream nearly a foot in diameter, like a huge white snake. Already the clay had acquired the uniformity characteristic of a manufactured product.

Anna moved to touch the bolts of the enormous twenty-four-chambered press.

"Don't stand there," said Mynors. "The pressure is tremendous, and if the thing were to burst——"

She fled hastily. "But isn't it dangerous for the workmen?" she asked.

Eli Machin, the engineman, the oldest employee on the works, a moneyed man and the pattern of reliability,

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allowed a vague smile to flit across his face at this remark. He had ascended from the engine-house below in order to exhibit the tricks of the various machines, and that done he disappeared. Anna was awed by the sensation of being surrounded by terrific forces always straining for release and held in check by the power of a single wall.

"Come and see a plate made: that is one of the simplest things, and the batting-machine is worth looking at," said Mynors, and they went into the nearest shop, a hot interior in the shape of four corridors round a solid square middle. Here men and women were working side by side, the women subordinate to the men. All were preoccupied, wrapped up in their respective operations, and there was the sound of irregular whirring movements from every part of the big room. The air was laden with whitish dust, and clay was omnipresent—on the floor, the walls, the benches, the windows, on clothes, hands, and faces. It was in this shop, where both hollow-ware presses and flat presses were busy as *only craftsmen on piecework* can be busy, that more than anywhere else clay was to be seen 'in the hand of the potter.' Near the door a stout man with a good-humoured face flung some clay on to a revolving disk, and even as Anna passed a jar sprang into existence. One instant the clay was an amorphous mass, the next it was a vessel perfectly circular, of a prescribed width and a prescribed depth, the flat and apparently clumsy fingers of the craftsman had seemed to lose themselves in the clay for a fraction of time, and the miracle was accomplished. The man threw these vessels with the rapidity of a Roman candle throwing off coloured stars, and one woman was kept busy in supplying him with material, and relieving his bench of the finished articles. Mynors drew Anna along to the batting-machine for plate-makers, at that period rather a novelty and the latest invention of the dead genius whose brain has reconstituted a whole industry on new lines. Confronted with a piece of clay, the batting-machine descended upon it with the ferocity of a wild animal, worried it, stretched it, smoothed it into the width

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and thickness of a plate, and then desisted of itself and waited inactive for the flat presser to remove its victim to his more exact shaping machine. Several men were producing plates, but their rapid labours seemed less astonishing than the preliminary feat of the batting-machine. All the ware as it was moulded disappeared into the vast cupboards occupying the centre of the shop, where Mynors showed Anna innumerable rows of shelves full of pots in process of steam-drying. Neither time nor space nor material was wasted in this ant-heap of industry. In order to move to and fro, the women were compelled to insinuate themselves past the stationary bodies of the men. Anna marvelled at the careless accuracy with which they fed the batting-machines with lumps precisely calculated to form a plate of a given diameter. Every one exerted himself as though the salvation of the world hung on the production of so much stuff by a certain hour, dust, heat, and the presence of a stranger were alike unheeded in the mad creative passion.

"Now," said Mynors the cicerone, opening another door which gave into the yard, "when all that stuff is dried and fettled—smoothed, you know—it goes into the biscuit oven, that's the first firing. There's the biscuit oven, but we can't inspect it because it's just being drawn."

He pointed to the oven near by, in whose dark interior the forms of men, naked to the waist, could dimly be seen struggling with the weight of *saggars*<sup>1</sup> full of ware. It seemed like some release of martyrs, this unpacking of the immense oven, which, after being flooded with a sea of flame for fifty-four hours, had cooled for two days, and was yet hotter than the Equator. The inertness and pallor of the *saggars* seemed to be the physical result of their fiery trial, and one wondered that they should have survived the trial. Mynors went into the place adjoining the oven and brought back a plate out of an open *saggar*; it was still quite warm. It had the *matt* surface of a biscuit,

<sup>1</sup> *Saggars* large oval receptacles of coarse clay, in which the ware is placed for firing.

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and adhered slightly to the fingers . it was now a ' crook ' ; it had exchanged malleability for brittleness, and nothing mortal could undo what the fire had done. Mynors took the plate with him to the biscuit-warehouse, a long room where one was forced to keep to narrow alleys amid parterres of pots . A solitary biscuit-warehouseman was examining the ware in order to determine the remuneration of the pressers

### EXERCISES

1 *Vocabulary* From the extract make up a list of words which can be used in describing the potter's craft . Examples are *bank, jacket-man, malleability* . Give the meaning of each word

2 *Interpretation* " The horse is less to the Arab than clay is to the Bursley man " Explain this statement

3 *Composition*

(a) Describe a visit to a factory

(b) Write the autobiography of a soup-plate



## THOMAS CARLYLE

### *The History of the French Revolution*

THOMAS CARLYLE (1795–1881) became the type of the poor Scottish boy who, by sheer hard work and determination, made his way up the ladder of success. His father was a stone-mason in the small Dumfries-shire town of Ecclefechan. After years of struggle at school and university, Carlyle settled in London and produced his remarkable works, *The History of the French Revolution* (1837), *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1845), and *The Life of Frederick the Great* (1865). His historical methods are peculiar to himself. He writes in an explosive, disjointed style, with many exclamations and apostrophes. Often the style is hard to follow, but at its best it is capable of great force and beauty.

The following passage from *The History of the French Revolution* will show Carlyle's method. It describes the flight of the French royal family from the Tuileries, which was their prison in Paris. The party nearly reached the Belgian frontier, but they were stopped and recaptured. Louis was executed in 1793, and Marie a few months afterwards.

## FLIGHT

ON Monday night, the 20th of June 1791, about eleven o'clock, there is many a hackney-coach, and glass-coach (*carrosse de remise*), still rumbling, or at rest, on the streets of Paris. But of all glass-coaches, we recommend this to thee, O Reader, which stands drawn up in the Rue de l'Echelle, hard by the Carrousel and outgate of the Tuileries, opposite Ronsin the saddler's door, as if waiting for a fare there !

Not long does it wait—a hooded Dame, with two hooded Children, has issued from Villequier's door, where no sentry walks, into the Tuileries Court-of-Princes, into the Carrousel, into the Rue de l'Echelle—where the Glass-coachman readily admits them, and again waits. Not long another Dame, likewise hooded or shrouded, leaning on a servant, issues in the same manner, bids the servant good night, and is, in the same manner, by the Glass-coachman, cheerfully admitted. Whither go so many Dames? 'Tis his Majesty's *Couchée*, Majesty just gone to bed, and all the Palace-world is retiring home. But the Glass-coachman still waits—his fare seemingly incomplete.

By and by, we note a thickset Individual, in round hat and peruke, arm-in-arm with some servant, seemingly of the Runner or Courier sort—he also issues through Villequier's door, starts a shoe-buckle as he passes one of the sentries, stoops down to clasp it again; is however, by the Glass-coachman, still more cheerfully admitted. And *now*, is his fare complete? Not yet—the Glass-coachman still waits. Alas! and the false Chambermaid has warned Gouvion that she thinks the Royal Family will fly this very night, and Gouvion, distrusting his own glazed eyes,

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has sent express for Lafayette; and Lafayette's Carriage, flaming with lights, rolls this moment through the inner Arch of the Carrousel—where a Lady, shaded in broad gypsy-hat, and leaning on the arm of a servant, also of the Runner or Courier sort, stands aside to let it pass, and has even the whim to touch a spoke of it with her *badine*, light little magic rod which she calls *badine*, such as the Beautiful then wore. The flare of Lafayette's Carriage rolls past. all is found quiet in the Court-of-Princes—sentries at their post, Majesties' Apartments closed in smooth rest. Your false Chambermaid must have been mistaken? Watch thou, Gouvion, with Argus' vigilance! for, of a truth, treachery is within these walls

But where is the Lady that stood aside in gypsy-hat, and touched the wheel-spoke with her *badine*? O Reader, that Lady that touched the wheel-spoke was the Queen of France! She had issued safe through that inner Arch, into the Carrousel itself, but not into the Rue de l'Echelle. Flurried by the rattle and rencounter, she took the right hand, not the left. Neither she nor her Courier knows Paris; he indeed is no Courier, but a loyal stupid *ci-devant* Bodyguard disguised as one. They are off, quite wrong, over the Pont Royal and River, roaming disconsolate in the Rue du Bac, far from the Glass-coachman, who still waits. Waits, with flutter of heart, with thoughts—which he must button close up under his *jarvie-surtout*!

Midnight clangs from all the City-steeple; one precious hour has been spent so; most mortals are asleep. The Glass-coachman waits—and in what mood! A brother jarvie drives up, enters into conversation, is answered cheerfully in jarvie dialect. the brothers of the whip exchange a pinch of snuff, decline drinking together; and part with good night. Be the Heavens blest! here at length is the Queen-lady, in gypsy-hat, safe after perils; who has had to inquire her way. She too is admitted; her Courier jumps aloft, as the other, who is also a disguised Bodyguard, has done; and now, O Glass-coachman of a thousand—Count Fersen, for the Reader sees it is thou—DRIVE!

## FLIGHT

Dust shall not stick to the hoofs of Fersen. crack ! crack ! the Glass-coach rattles, and every soul breathes lighter. But is Fersen on the right road? North-eastward, to the Barrier of Saint-Martin and Metz Highway—*thither* were we bound; and lo ! he drives right northward. The royal Individual, in round hat and peruke, sits astonished; but, right or wrong, there is no remedy. Crack ! crack ! we go incessant, through the slumbering City. Seldom, since Paris rose out of mud, or the Longhaired Kings went in Bullock-carts, was there such a drive. Mortals on each hand of you, close by, stretched out horizontal, dormant, and we, alive and quaking ! Crack ! crack ! through the Rue de Grammont; across the Boulevard; up the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin—these windows, all silent, of No 42, were Mirabeau's. Towards the Barrier, not of Saint-Martin, but of Clichy on the utmost North ! Patience, ye royal Individuals. Fersen understands what he is about. Passing up the Rue de Clichy, he alights for one moment at Madame Sullivan's.

"Did Count Fersen's Coachman get the Baroness de Korff's new Berline?"

"Gone with it an hour and half ago," grumbles responsive the drowsy porter.

"*C'est bien.*"

Yes, it is well, though, had not such hour and half been lost, it were still better. Forth, therefore, O Fersen, *fast*, by the Barrier de Clichy, then eastward along the Outer Boulevard, what horses and whipcord can do !

Thus Fersen drives, through the ambrosial night. Sleeping Paris is now all on the right hand of him; silent except for some snoring hum. and now he is eastward as far as the Barrier de Saint-Martin, looking earnestly for Baroness de Korff's Berline. This Heaven's Berline he at length does descry, drawn up with its six horses, his own German Coachman waiting on the box. Right, thou good German: now haste, whither thou knowest ! And as for us of the Glass-coach, haste too, O haste ! much time is already lost. The august Glass-coach fare, six Insides,

hastily packs itself into the new Berline; two Bodyguard Couriers behind. The Glass-coach itself is turned adrift, its head towards the City; to wander whither it lists—and be found next morning tumbled in a ditch. But Fersen is on the new box, with its brave new hammer-cloths; flourishing his whip, he bolts forward towards Bondy. There a third and final Bodyguard Courier of ours ought surely to be, with post-horses ready ordered. There likewise ought that purchased Chaise, with the two Waiting-maids and their handboxes, to be; whom also her Majesty could not travel without. Swift, thou deft Fersen, and may the Heavens turn it well!

Once more, by Heaven's blessing, it is all well. Here is the sleeping hamlet of Bondy; Chaise, with Waiting-women; horses all ready, and postilions with their churn-boots, impatient in the dewy dawn. Brief harnessing done, the postilions with their churn-boots vault into the saddles, brandish circularly their little noisy whips. Fersen, under his *jarvie-surtout*, bends in lowly silent reverence of adieu, royal hands wave speechless inexpressible response; Baroness de Korff's Berline, with the Royalty of France, bounds off for ever, as it proved. Deft Fersen dashes obliquely northward, through the country, towards Bougret, gains Bougret, finds his German coachman and chariot waiting there; cracks off, and drives undiscovered into unknown space. A deft active man, we say; what he undertook to do is nimbly and successfully done.

And so the Royalty of France is actually fled? This precious night, the shortest of the year, it flies, and drives! Baroness de Korff is, at bottom, Dame de Tourzel, Governess of the Royal Children—she who came hooded with the two hooded little ones, little Dauphin, and little Madame Royale, known long afterwards as Duchesse d'Angoulême. Baroness de Korff's Waiting-maid is the Queen in gypsy-hat. The royal Individual in round hat and peruke, he is valet for the time being. That other

## FLIGHT

hooded Dame, styled Travelling-companion, is kind Sister Elizabeth: she had sworn long since, when the Insurrection of Women was, that only death should part her and them. And so they rush there, not too impetuously, through the Wood of Bondy; over a Rubicon in their own and France's History.

Great! though the future is all vague. If we reach Bouillé? If we do not reach him? O Louis! and this all round thee is the great slumbering Earth (and overhead, the great watchful Heaven); the slumbering Wood of Bondy—where Longhaired Childeric Do-nothing was struck through with iron, not unreasonably in a world like ours. These peaked stone towers are Raincy; towers of wicked D'Orléans. All slumbers save the multiplex rustle of our new Berline. Loose-skirted scare-crow of an Herb-merchant, with his ass and early greens, toilsomely plodding, seems the only creature we meet. But right ahead the great North-east sends up evermore his grey brindled dawn: from dewy branch, birds here and there, with short deep warble, salute the coming Sun. Stars fade out, and Galaxies. street-lamps of the City of God. The Universe, O my brothers, is flinging wide its portals for the Levee of the GREAT HIGH KING. Thou, poor King Louis, farrest nevertheless, as mortals do, towards Orient lands of Hope; and the Tuileries with *its* Levees, and France, and the Earth itself is but a larger kind of dog-hutch—occasionally going rabid.

## EXERCISES

1 *Meanings* Carlyle is fond of making comments and side-references, most of which have some connexion with his subject. Explain the meaning of the following, and show their connexion with the subject:

- (a) Watch thou, Gouvion, with Argus' vigilance!
- (b) Which he must button close up under his *jarvie-surtout*!
- (c) Seldom, since Paris rose out of mud, or the Longhaired Kings went in Bullock-carts, was there such a drive.

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

(d) Where Longhaired Childeric Do-nothing was struck through with iron

(e) Stars fade out, and Galaxies street-lamps of the City of God

2 *Interpretation* Take the paragraph beginning, "Thus Fersen drives" (p. 261)

(a) "The august Glass-coach fare, six Insides, hastily packs itself into the new Berline" Who were the "six Insides"? What is a "Berline"? Why should it be useful on such an occasion as this?

(b) Explain the phrases, *ambrosial night* and *brave new hammer-cloths*

(c) Express the paragraph simply and in ordinary prose

(d) Write a careful note on Carlyle's style. This should contain references to the construction of his sentences and his use of figures of speech. Quote examples of these.

3 *Précis* Give a brief and straightforward summary of the passage

4 *Composition*

(a) Write an essay on Louis XVI

(b) Describe the attempted flight, as told by Count Fersen, the disguised coachman

## HERMAN MELVILLE

### *Moby Dick*

HERMAN MELVILLE (1819-91), who was born in New York, shipped as a cabin-boy on a voyage to England and afterwards became a foremast hand on a whaling-ship. Aboard the ship the conditions were so intolerable that, along with another sailor, he deserted when they reached the Marquesas Islands, in the South Seas. There he 'went native,' as is told in his books, *Typee* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847). His other important story, *Moby Dick*, was published in 1851. Later in life he settled in New York as a literary man. He wrote much inferior work, but at his best he is full of life and picturesqueness.

Our extract is from *Moby Dick*, the story of the great white whale. It is an epic of the struggles of a ship's company of whalers to lay him low. The lurid characters of the crew are touched off with vigour and success. The leader of the pursuers is one-legged Captain Ahab, whose other leg had been bitten off by the whale. Others are the first-mate, Starbuck, and the negro harpooner, Queequeg.



## STUBB KILLS A WHALE

**I**F to Starbuck the apparition of the Squid was a thing of portents, to Queequeg it was quite a different object.

"When you see him 'quid," said the savage, honing his harpoon in the bow of his hoisted boat, "then you quick see him 'parm whale."

The next day was exceedingly still and sultry, and with nothing special to engage them, the *Pequod's* crew could hardly resist the spell of sleep induced by such a vacant sea. For this part of the Indian Ocean through which we then were voyaging is not what whalers call a lively ground; that is, it affords fewer glimpses of porpoises, dolphins, flying-fish, and other vivacious denizens of more stirring waters, than those off the Rio de la Plata, or the in-shore ground off Peru.

It was my turn to stand at the foremast-head; and with my shoulders leaning against the slackened royal shrouds, to and fro I idly swayed in what seemed an enchanted air. No resolution could withstand it, in that dreamy mood losing all consciousness, at last my soul went out of my body, though my body still continued to sway as a pendulum will, long after the power which first moved it is withdrawn.

Ere forgetfulness altogether came over me, I had noticed that the seamen at the main and mizzen mast-heads were already drowsy. So that at last all three of us lifelessly swung from the spars, and for every swing that we made there was a nod from below from the slumbering helmsman. The waves, too, nodded their indolent crests; and across the wide trance of the sea, east nodded to west, and the sun over all.

## STUBB KILLS A WHALE

Suddenly bubbles seemed bursting beneath my closed eyes; like vices my hands grasped the shrouds; some invisible, gracious agency preserved me; with a shock I came back to life. And lo! close under our lee, not forty fathoms off, a gigantic Sperm Whale lay rolling in the water like the capsized hull of a frigate, his broad, glossy back, of an Ethiopian hue, glistening in the sun's rays like a mirror. But lazily undulating in the trough of the sea, and ever and anon tranquilly spouting his vapoury jet, the whale looked like a portly burgher smoking his pipe of a warm afternoon. But that pipe, poor whale, was thy last. As if struck by some enchanter's wand, the sleepy ship and every sleeper in it all at once started into wakefulness; and more than a score of voices from all parts of the vessel, simultaneously with the three notes from aloft, shouted forth the accustomed cry, as the great fish slowly and regularly spouted the sparkling brine into the air.

"Clear away the boats! Luff!" cried Ahab. And obeying his own order, he dashed the helm down before the helmsman could handle the spokes.

The sudden exclamations of the crew must have alarmed the whale, and ere the boats were down, majestically turning, he swam away to the leeward, but with such a steady tranquillity, and making so few ripples as he swam, that thinking after all he might not as yet be alarmed, Ahab gave orders that not an oar should be used, and no man must speak but in whispers. So seated like Ontario Indians on the gunwales of the boats, we swiftly but silently paddled along, the calm not admitting of the noiseless sails being set. Presently, as we thus glided in chase, the monster perpendicularly flitted his tail forty feet into the air, and then sank out of sight like a tower swallowed up.

"There go flukes!" was the cry, an announcement immediately followed by Stubb's producing his match and igniting his pipe, for now a respite was granted. After the full interval of his sounding had elapsed, the whale rose again, and being now in advance of the smoker's boat, and

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

much nearer to it than to any of the others, Stubb counted upon the honour of the capture. It was obvious, now, that the whale had at length become aware of his pursuers. All silence of cautiousness was therefore no longer of use. Paddles were dropped, and oars came loudly into play. And still puffing at his pipe, Stubb cheered on his crew to the assault.

Yes, a mighty change had come over the fish. All alive to his jeopardy, he was going "head out"; that part obliquely projecting from the mad yeast which he brewed.<sup>1</sup>

"Start her, start her, my men! Don't hurry yourselves; take plenty of time—but start her, start her like thunder-claps, that's all," cried Stubb, spluttering out the smoke as he spoke "Start her, now, give 'em the long and strong stroke, Tashtego Start her, Tash, my boy—start her, all; but keep cool, keep cool—cucumbers is the word—easy, easy—only start her like grim death and grinning devils, and raise the buried dead perpendicular out of their graves, boys—that's all Start her!"

"Woo-hoo! Wa-hee!" screamed the Gay-Header in reply, raising some old war-whoop to the skies, as every oarsman in the strained boat involuntarily bounced forward with the one tremendous leading stroke which the eager Indian gave

But his wild screams were answered by others quite as wild. "Kee-hee! Kee-hee!" yelled Daggoo, straining forwards and backwards on his seat, like a pacing tiger in his cage.

"Ka-la! Koo-loo!" howled Queequeg, as if smacking

<sup>1</sup> It will be seen in some other place of what a very light substance the entire interior of the sperm whale's enormous head consists. Though apparently the most massive, it is by far the most buoyant part about him. So that with ease he elevates it in the air, and invariably does so when going at his utmost speed. Besides, such is the breadth of the upper part of the front of his head, and such the tapering cut-water formation of the lower part, that by obliquely elevating his head, he thereby may be said to transform himself from a bluff-bowed sluggish galliot into a sharp-pointed New York pilot-boat

## STUBB KILLS A WHALE

his lips over a mouthful of Grenadier's steak And thus with oars and yells the keels cut the sea. Meanwhile, Stubb retaining his place in the van, still encouraged his men to the onset, all the while puffing the smoke from his mouth. Like desperadoes they tugged and they strained, till the welcome cry was heard—"Stand up, Tashtego!—give it to him!" The harpoon was hurled. "Stern all!" The oarsmen backed water; the same moment something went hot and hissing along every one of their wrists. It was the magical line. An instant before, Stubb had swiftly caught two additional turns with it round the loggerhead, whence, by reason of its increased rapid circlings, a hempen blue smoke now jetted up and mingled with the steady fumes from his pipe. As the line passed round and round the loggerhead, so also, just before reaching that point, it blisteringly passed through and through both of Stubb's hands, from which the hand-cloths, or squares of quilted canvas sometimes worn at these times, had accidentally dropped. It was like holding an enemy's sharp two-edged sword by the blade, and that enemy all the time striving to wrest it out of your clutch.

"Wet the line! wet the line!" cried Stubb to the tub oarsman (him seated by the tub), who, snatching off his hat, dashed the sea-water into it.<sup>1</sup> More turns were taken, so that the line began holding its place. The boat now flew through the boiling water like a shark all fins. Stubb and Tashtego here changed places—stem for stern—a staggering business truly in that rocking commotion.

From the vibrating line extending the entire length of the upper part of the boat, and from its now being more tight than a harpstring, you would have thought the craft had two keels—one cleaving the water, the other the air—as the boat churned on through both opposing elements at

<sup>1</sup> Partly to show the indispensableness of this act, it may here be stated that, in the old Dutch fishery, a mop was used to dash the running line with water, in many other ships, a wooden piggion, or bauler, is set apart for that purpose. Your hat, however, is the most convenient.

## PRACTICAL PROSE READERS

once. A continual cascade played at the bows; a ceaseless whirling eddy in her wake, and, at the slightest motion from within, even but of a little finger, the vibrating, cracking craft canted over her spasmodic gunwale into the sea. Thus they rushed, each man with might and main clinging to his seat, to prevent being tossed to the foam, and the tall form of Tashtego at the steering oar crouching almost double, in order to bring down his centre of gravity. Whole Atlantics and Pacifics seemed passed as they shot on their way, till at length the whale somewhat slackened his flight.

"Haul in—haul in!" cried Stubb to the bowsman, and, facing round towards the whale, all hands began pulling the boat up to him, while yet the boat was being towed on. Soon ranging up by his flank, Stubb, firmly planting his knee in the clumsy cleat, darted dart after dart into the flying fish; at the word of command, the boat alternately sterning out of the way of the whale's horrible wallow, and then ranging up for another fling.

The red tide now poured from all sides of the monster like brooks down a hill. His tormented body rolled not in brine but in blood, which bubbled and seethed for furlongs behind in their wake. The slanting sun playing upon this crimson pond in the sea, sent back its reflection into every face, so that they all glowed to each other like red men. And all the while, jet after jet of white smoke was agonizingly shot from the spiracle of the whale, and vehement puff after puff from the mouth of the excited headsman, as at every dart, hauling in upon his crooked lance (by the line attached to it), Stubb straightened it again and again, by a few rapid blows against the gunwale, then again and again sent it into the whale.

"Pull up!—pull up!" he now cried to the bowsman, as the waning whale relaxed in his wrath. "Pull up!—close to!" and the boat ranged along the fish's flank. When reaching far over the bow, Stubb slowly churned his long sharp lance into the fish, and kept it there, carefully churning and churning, as if cautiously seeking to

## STUBB KILLS A WHALE

feel after some gold watch that the whale might have swallowed, and which he was fearful of breaking ere he could hook it out. But that gold watch he sought was the innermost life of the fish. And now it is struck ; for, starting from his trance into that unspeakable thing called his 'flurry,' the monster horribly wallowed in his blood, over-wrapped himself in impenetrable, mad, boiling spray, so that the imperilled craft, instantly dropping astern, had much ado blindly to struggle out from that phrensied twilight into the clear air of the day

And now abating in his flurry, the whale once more rolled out into view, surging from side to side, spasmodically dilating and contracting his spout-hole, with sharp, cracking, agonized respirations. At last, gush after gush of clotted red gore, as if it had been the purple lees of red wine, shot into the frightened air ; and falling back again, ran dripping down his motionless flanks into the sea. His heart had burst !

"He's dead, Mr Stubb," said Daggoo.

"Yes ; both pipes smoked out !" and withdrawing his own from his mouth, Stubb scattered the dead ashes over the water ; and, for a moment, stood thoughtfully eyeing the vast corpse he had made

MRS H B. STOWE

*Uncle Tom's Cabin*

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE (1811-96) lives in literature by her book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), one of the few novels that have helped to shape history. The authoress was brought up in a strictly religious and anti-slavery atmosphere, her father being a minister and her husband a theological professor. For many years she lived in Ohio, where only a river separated her from the slave-owning territory. Across the river came many fugitive slaves, who were sheltered by the anti-slavery organization which was known as the 'Underground Railway,' and in which Mrs Stowe was prominent.

Her experiences with fugitive slaves were woven into her story, which had an instant and amazing success. At the time of its publication passions were in an explosive state over the slavery question, and there can be little doubt that *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, issued in 1852, did much to cause the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861.

Mrs Stowe's story is told simply, but with great simplicity and charm. Her characters—such as Mr Shelby (the kind but weak owner of Uncle Tom), Eliza (Mr Shelby's maid), Haley (the rascally slave-trader), and Uncle Tom himself—are no better than the usual types of such characters. Behind all these figures, however, lie a vast problem and a great pathos which give the book its tragic interest and its human appeal.

In our extract Mr Shelby has sold Harry, Eliza's son, to the slave-trader. Hearing of this, and being desirous of saving her son from the hands of Haley, Eliza runs away. Our passage tells of her dramatic escape over the ice of the river. Later in the story Eliza escapes to Canada and freedom.

## ESCAPE

### I

**B**LACK SAM, as he was commonly called, from his being about three shades blacker than any other son of ebony on the place, was revolving the matter profoundly in all its phases and bearings

"It's an ill wind dat blows nowhar—dat ar a fact," said Sam sententiously, giving an additional hoist to his pantaloons, and adroitly substituting a long nail in place of a missing suspender-button, with which effort of mechanical genius he seemed highly delighted

"Yes, it's an ill wind blows nowhar," he repeated "Now, dar, Tom's down—wal, course der's room for some nigger to be up—and why not dis nigger?—dat's de idee. Tom, a riding round de country—boots blacked—pass in his pocket—all grand as Cuffee, who but he? Now, why shouldn't Sam?—dat's what I want to know "

"Halloo, Sam—O Sam ! Mas'r wants you to cotch Bill and Jerry," said Andy, cutting short Sam's soliloquy.

"High! what's afoot now, young un? "

"Why, you don't know, I s'pose, that Lizzy's cut stick and clared out, with her young un? "

"You teach your granny! " said Sam, with infinite contempt; "knowed it a heap sight sooner than you did; this nigger a'n't so green, now! "

"Well, anyhow, mas'r wants Bill and Jerry geared right up; and you and I's to go with Mas'r Haley, to look after her."

"Good, now! dat's de time o' day! " said Sam. "It's Sam dat's called for in dese yer times. He's de nigger."



See if I don't cotch her now; mas'r 'll see what Sam can do!"

"Ah! but, Sam," said Andy, "you'd better think twice; for missis don't want her cotched, and she'll be in your wool."

"High!" said Sam, opening his eyes. "How you know dat?"

"Heard her say so, my own self, dis blessed mornin', when I bring in mas'r's shaving-water. She sent me to see why Lizzy didn't come to dress her; and when I telled her she was off, she jest riz up, and sez she, 'The Lord be praised', and mas'r he seemed real mad, and sez he, 'Wife, you talk like a fool.' But Lor'! she'll bring him to! I knows well enough how that'll be—it's allers best to stand missis' side the fence, now I tell yer."

Black Sam, upon this, scratched his woolly pate

"Der an't no sayin'—never—'bout no kind o' thing in *dis* yer world," he said at last

Sam spoke like a philosopher, emphasizing *this*—as if he had had a large experience in different sorts of worlds, and therefore had come to his conclusions advisedly

"Now, sartin I'd a said that missis would a scoured the versal world after Lizzy," added Sam thoughtfully

"So she would," said Andy, "but can't ye see through a ladder, ye black nigger? Missis don't want *dis* yer Mas'r Haley to get Lizzy's boy, dat's de go!"

"High!" said Sam, with an indescribable intonation, known only to those who have heard it among the negroes.

"And I tell you more'n all," said Andy; "I spec's you'd better be making tracks for dem horses—mighty sudden, too—for I hearn missis 'quirin' arter yer—so you've stood foolin' long enough"

Sam, upon this, began to bestir himself in real earnest, and after awhile appeared, bearing down gloriously towards the house, with Bill and Jerry in a full canter, and adroitly throwing himself off before they had any idea of stopping, he brought them up alongside of the horse-post like a tornado. Haley's horse, which was a skittish

## ESCAPE

young colt, winced and bounced, and pulled hard at his halter.

"Ho, ho!" said Sam, "skeery, are ye?" and his black visage lighted up with a curious, mischievous gleam. "I'll fix ye, now," said he.

There was a large beech tree overshadowing the place, and the small, sharp, triangular beechnuts lay scattered thickly on the ground. With one of these in his fingers, Sam approached the colt, stroked and patted, and seemed apparently busy in soothing his agitation. On pretence of adjusting the saddle, he adroitly slipped under it the sharp little nut, in such a manner that the least weight brought upon the saddle would annoy the nervous sensibilities of the animal, without leaving any perceptible graze or wound.

"Dar!" he said, rolling his eyes with an approving grin, "me fix 'em!"

At this moment Mrs Shelby appeared on the balcony, beckoning to him. Sam approached with as good a determination to pay court as did ever suitor after a vacant place at St James's or Washington.

"Why have you been loitering so, Sam? I sent Andy to tell you to hurry."

"Lord bless you, missis!" said Sam, "horses won't be cotched all in a minit, they'd done clared out way down to the south pasture, and the Lord knows whar!"

"Sam, how often must I tell you not to say 'Lord bless you,' and 'the Lord knows,' and such things? It's wicked."

"O Lord bless my soul! I done forget, missis! I won't say nothing of de sort no more."

"Why, Sam, you just *have* said it again."

"Did I? O Lord! I mean, I didn't go for to say it."

"You must be *careful*, Sam."

"Just let me get my breath, missis, and I'll start fair. I'll be bery careful."

"Well, Sam, you are to go with Mr Haley, to show him the road, and help him. Be careful of the horses, Sam;

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you know Jerry was a little lame last week ; *don't ride them too fast.*"

Mrs Shelby spoke the last words with a low voice and a strong emphasis

" Let dis child alone for dat ! " said Sam, rolling up his eyes with a volume of meaning. " Lord knows ! High ! Didn't say dat ! " said he, suddenly catching his breath, with a ludicrous flourish of apprehension, which made his mistress laugh, spite of herself. " Yes, missis, I'll look out for de hosses ! "

" Now, Andy," said Sam, returning to his stand under the beech trees, " you see I wouldn't be 'tall surprised if dat ar gen'lman's crittur should gib a fling, by and by, when he comes to be a gettin' up You know, Andy, critturs *will* do such things ", and therewith Sam poked Andy in the side, in a highly suggestive manner.

" High ! " said Andy, with an air of instant appreciation.

" Yes, you see, Andy, missis wants to make time—dat ar's clar to der most or'nary 'bserver I jist make a little for her Now, you see, get all dese yer hosses loose, caperin' permiscus round dis yer lot and down to the wood dar, and I 'spec' mas'r won't be off in a hurry "

Andy grinned.

" Yer see," said Sam, " yer see, Andy, if any such thing should happen as that Mas'r Haley's horse *should* begin to act contrary, and cut up, you and I jist let's go of our'n to help him, and *we'll help him*—oh yes ! " And Sam and Andy laid their heads back on their shoulders, and broke into a low, immoderate laugh, snapping their fingers and flourishing their heels with exquisite delight

At this instant Haley appeared on the verandah. Somewhat mollified by certain cups of very good coffee, he came out smiling and talking, in tolerably restored humour. Sam and Andy, clawing for certain fragmentary palm leaves, which they were in the habit of considering as hats, flew to the horse-posts, to be ready to " help mas'r."

Sam's palm leaf had been ingeniously disentangled from

## ESCAPE

all pretensions to braid, as respects its brim; and the slivers starting apart, and standing upright, gave it a blazing air of freedom and defiance, quite equal to that of any Fejee chief, while the whole brim of Andy's being departed bodily, he rapped the crown on his head with a dexterous thump, and looked about well pleased, as if to say, "Who says I haven't got a hat?"

"Well, boys," said Haley, "look alive now, we must lose no time."

"Not a bit of him, mas'r!" said Sam, putting Haley's rein in his hand, and holding his stirrup, while Andy was untying the other two horses.

The instant Haley touched the saddle, the mettlesome creature bounded from the earth with a sudden spring that threw his master sprawling, some feet off, on the soft, dry turf. Sam, with frantic ejaculations, made a dive at the reins, but only succeeded in brushing the blazing palm leaf aforementioned into the horse's eyes, which by no means tended to allay the confusion of his nerves. So, with great vehemence, he overturned Sam, and giving two or three contemptuous snorts, flourished his heels vigorously in the air, and was soon prancing away towards the lower end of the lawn, followed by Bill and Jerry, whom Andy had not failed to let loose, according to contract, speeding them off with various direful ejaculations. And now ensued a miscellaneous scene of confusion. Sam and Andy ran and shouted—dogs barked here and there—and Mike, Mose, Mandy, Fanny, and all the smaller specimens on the place, both male and female, raced, clapped hands, whooped and shouted with outrageous officiousness and untiring zeal.

Haley ran up and down, and cursed and swore, and stamped miscellaneously. Mr Shelby in vain tried to shout directions from the balcony, and Mrs Shelby from her chamber window alternately laughed and wondered—not without some inkling of what lay at the bottom of all this confusion.

At last, about twelve o'clock, Sam appeared triumphant.

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phant, mounted on Jerry, with Haley's horse by his side, reeking with sweat, but with flashing eyes and dilated nostrils, showing that the spirit of freedom had not yet entirely subsided.

"Well, well!" said Haley, "you've lost me near three hours, with your cursed nonsense. Now let's be off, and have no more fooling."

Mrs Shelby, who, greatly to her amusement, had overheard this conversation from her verandah, now resolved to do her part. She came forward, and courteously expressing her concern for Haley's accident, pressed him to stay to dinner, saying that the cook should bring it on the table immediately.

Thus, all things considered, Haley, with rather an equivocal grace, proceeded to the parlour, while Sam, rolling his eyes after him with unutterable meaning, proceeded gravely with the horses to the stableyard.

## II

Though Mrs Shelby had promised that the dinner should be hurried on table, yet it was soon seen, as the thing has often been seen before, that it required more than one to make a bargain. So, although the order was fairly given out in Haley's hearing, and carried to Aunt Chloe by at least half a dozen juvenile messengers, that dignitary only gave certain very gruff snorts and tosses of her head, and went on with every operation in an unusually leisurely and circumstantial manner.

For some singular reason, an impression seemed to reign among the servants generally that missis would not be particularly disoblged by delay, and it was wonderful what a number of counter-accidents occurred constantly, to retard the course of things. One luckless wight contrived to upset the gravy, and then gravy had to be got up *de novo*, with due care and formality, Aunt Chloe watching and stirring with dogged precision, answering shortly, to all suggestions of haste, that she "warn't a-going to have

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raw gravy on the table, to help nobody's catchings." One tumbled down with the water, and had to go to the spring for more; and another precipitated the butter into the path of events, and there was, from time to time, giggling news brought into the kitchen that "Mas'r Haley was might oneasy, and that he couldn't sit in his cheer no ways, but was a-walkin' and stalkin' to the winders and through the porch "

At two o'clock Sam and Andy brought the horses up to the posts, apparently greatly refreshed and invigorated by the scamper of the morning

Sam was there new oiled from dinner, with an abundance of zealous and ready officiousness. As Haley approached, he was boasting, in flourishing style, to Andy, of the evident and eminent success of the operation, now that he had "farly come to it "

"Your master, I s'pose, don't keep no dogs?" said Haley thoughtfully, as he prepared to mount.

"Heaps on 'em," said Sam triumphantly; "thar's Bruno—he's a roarer! and, besides that, 'bout every nigger of us keeps a pup of some natur or uther."

"Poh!" said Haley—and he said something else, too, with regard to the said dogs, at which Sam muttered.

"I don't see no use cussin' on 'em, no way "

"But your master don't keep no dogs (I pretty much know he don't) for trackin' out niggers?"

Sam knew exactly what he meant, but he kept on a look of earnest and desperate simplicity

"Our dogs all smells round considerable sharp. I 'spect they's the kind, though they han't had no practice. They's *far* dogs, though, at most anything, if you'd get 'em started. Here, Bruno," he called, whistling to the lumbering Newfoundland, who came pitching tumultuously towards them

"You go hang!" said Haley, getting up. "Come, tumble up, now."

Sam tumbled up accordingly, dexterously contriving to tickle Andy as he did so, which occasioned Andy to

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split out into a laugh, greatly to Haley's indignation, who made a cut at him with his riding-whip.

"I's 'stonished at yer, Andy," said Sam, with awful gravity. "This yer's a seris business, Andy. Yer mustn't be a-makin' game. This yer an't no way to help mas'r."

"I shall take the straight road to the river," said Haley decidedly, after they had come to the boundaries of the estate. "I know the way of all of 'em—they make tracks for the underground."<sup>1</sup>

"Sartin," said Sam, "dat's de idee. Mas'r Haley hits de ting right in de middle. Now, der's two roads to de river—de dirt road and der pike—which mas'r mean to take?"

Andy looked up innocently at Sam, surprised at hearing this new geographical fact, but instantly confirmed what he said by a vehement reiteration.

"'Cause," said Sam, "I'd rather be 'clined to 'magine that Lizzy'd take de dirt road, bein' it's the least travelled."

Haley, notwithstanding that he was a very old bird, and naturally inclined to be suspicious of chaff, was rather brought up by this view of the case.

"If ye warn't both on ye such cussed liars, now!" said he contemplatively, as he pondered a moment.

The pensive, reflective tone in which this was spoken appeared to amuse Andy prodigiously, and he drew a little behind and shook so as apparently to run a great risk of falling off his horse, while Sam's face was immovably composed into the most doleful gravity.

"'Course," said Sam, "mas'r can do as he'd ruther, go de straight road, if mas'r think best—it's all one to us. Now, when I study 'pon it, I think de straight road de best, *deridedly*."

"She would naturally go a lonesome way," said Haley, thinking aloud, not minding Sam's remark.

"Dar an't no sayin'," said Sam, "gals is peculiar. They

<sup>1</sup> The 'Underground Railroad' was the name given to those sympathizers who helped fugitive slaves to escape into the 'free' States.

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never does nothin' ye thinks they will—most gen'lly the contrar. Gals is nat'lly made contrary; and so, if you thinks they've gone one road, it is sartin you'd better go t'other, and then you'll be sure to find 'em. Now, my private 'pinion is, Lizzy took der dirt road; so I think we'd better take de straight one."

This profound generic view of the female sex did not seem to dispose Haley particularly to the straight road; and he announced decidedly that he should go the other, and asked Sam when they should come to it

"A little piece ahead," said Sam, giving a wink to Andy, with the eye which was on Andy's side of the head; and he added gravely, "but I've studded on de matter, and I'm quite clar we ought not to go dat ar way. I nebber been over it, no way. It's despit lonesome, and we might lose our way—whar we'd come to, de Lord only knows"

"Nevertheless," said Haley, "I shall go that way."

"Now I think on't, I think I hearn 'em tell that dat ar road was all fenced up and down by der creek, and thar; an't it, Andy?"

Andy wasn't certain, he'd only "hearn tell" about that road, but never been over it. In short, he was strictly non-committal

Haley, accustomed to strike the balance of probabilities between lies of greater or less magnitude, thought that it lay in favour of the dirt road aforesaid. The mention of the thing he thought he perceived was involuntary on Sam's part at first; and his confused attempts to dissuade him he set down to desperate lying, on second thoughts, as being unwilling to implicate Eliza

When, therefore, Sam indicated the road, Haley plunged briskly into it, followed by Sam and Andy.

Now, the road, in fact, was an old one, that had formerly been a thoroughfare to the river, but abandoned for many years after the laying of the new pike. It was open for about an hour's ride, and after that it was cut across by various farms and fences. Sam knew this fact perfectly well; indeed, the road had been so long closed up that



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Andy had never heard of it. He therefore rode along with an air of dutiful submission, only groaning and vociferating occasionally that 'twas "desp't rough and bad for Jerry's foot."

After riding about an hour in this way the whole party made a precipitate and tumultuous descent into a barnyard belonging to a large farming establishment. Not a soul was in sight, all the hands being employed in the fields; but, as the barn stood conspicuously and plainly square across the road, it was evident that their journey in that direction had reached a decided finale.

"Wan't dat ar what I telled mas'r?" said Sam, with an air of injured innocence. "How does strange gentlemen 'spect to know more about a country dan de natives born and raised?"

"You rascal!" said Haley, "you knew all about this."

"Didn't I tell yer I know'd, and yer wouldn't believe me? I telled mas'r 'twas all shet up, and fenced up, and I didn't 'spect we could get through—Andy heard me."

It all was too true to be disputed, and the unlucky man had to pocket his wrath with the best grace he was able, and all three faced to the right-about, and took up their line of march for the highway.

In consequence of all the various delays, it was about three-quarters of an hour after Eliza had laid her child to sleep in the village tavern that the party came riding into the same place. Eliza was standing by the window, looking out in another direction, when Sam's quick eye caught a glimpse of her. Haley and Andy were two yards behind. At this crisis Sam contrived to have his hat blown off, and uttered a loud and characteristic ejaculation, which startled her at once; she drew suddenly back; the whole train swept by the window, round to the front door.

A thousand lives seemed to be concentrated in that one moment to Eliza. Her room opened by a side door to the river. She caught her child, and sprang down the steps towards it. The trader caught a full glimpse of her, just as she was disappearing down the bank; and throwing

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himself from his horse, and calling loudly on Sam and Andy, he was after her like a hound after a deer. In that dizzy moment her feet to her scarce seemed to touch the ground, and a moment brought her to the water's edge. Right on behind they came; and, nerved with strength such as God gives only to the desperate, with one wild cry and flying leap she vaulted sheer over the turbid current by the shore, on to the raft of ice beyond. It was a desperate leap—impossible to anything but madness and despair; and Haley, Sam, and Andy, instinctively cried out, and lifted up their hands as she did it.

The huge green fragment of ice on which she alighted pitched and creaked as her weight came on it, but she stayed there not a moment. With wild cries and desperate energy she leaped to another and still another cake; stumbling—leaping—slipping—springing upwards again! Her shoes are gone—her stockings cut from her feet—while blood marked every step, but she saw nothing, felt nothing, till dimly, as in a dream, she saw the Ohio side, and a man helping her up the bank.

"Yer a brave gal, now, whoever ye ar!" said the man.

Eliza recognized the voice and face of a man who owned a farm not far from her old home.

"Oh, Mr Symmes!—save me—do save me—do hide me!" said Eliza.

"Why, what's this?" said the man. "Why, if 'tain't Shelby's gal!"

"My child!—this boy—he's sold him! There is his mas'r," said she, pointing to the Kentucky shore. "Oh, Mr Symmes, you've got a little boy!"

"So I have," said the man, as he roughly, but kindly, drew her up the steep bank. "Besides, you're a right brave gal. I like grit wherever I see it."

When they had gained the top of the bank the man paused.

"I'd be glad to do something for ye," said he; "but then there's nowhar I could take ye. The best I can do is to tell ye to go *thar*," said he, pointing to a large white

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house which stood by itself, off the main street of the village. "Go thar, they're kind folks Thar's no kind o' danger but they'll help you—they're up to all that sort o' thing."

The woman folded her child to her bosom, and walked firmly and swiftly away The man stood and looked after her.

Haley had stood a perfectly amazed spectator of the scene, till Eliza had disappeared up the bank, when he turned a blank inquiring look on Sam and Andy.

"That ar was a tolable fair stroke of business," said Sam

"The gal's got seven devils in her, I believe," said Haley. "How like a wild cat she jumped!"

"Wal, now," said Sam, scratching his head, "I hope mas'r 'll 'scuse us tryin' dat ar road Don't think I feel spry enough for dat ar, no way!" and Sam gave a hoarse chuckle.

"You laugh!" said the trader, with a growl.

"Lord bless you, mas'r, I couldn't help it, now," said Sam, giving way to the long-pent-up delight of his soul. "She looked so curis, a-leapin' and springin'—ice a-crackin'—and only to hear her—plump! ker chunk! ker splash! Spring! Lord! how she goes it!" and Sam and Andy laughed till the tears rolled down their cheeks.

"I'll make ye laugh t'other side yer mouths!" said the trader, laying about their heads with his riding-whip

Both ducked, and ran shouting up the bank, and were on their horses before he was up.

"Good evening, mas'r!" said Sam, with much gravity. "I bery much 'spect missis be anxious 'bout Jerry. Mas'r Haley won't want us no longer. Missis wouldn't hear of our ridin' the critters over Lizzy's bridge to-night"; and, with a facetious poke into Andy's ribs, he started off, followed by the latter, at full speed—their shouts of laughter coming faintly on the wind.

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### EXERCISES

1. *Précis.* Give a brief account of the events narrated in the extract.

2. *Composition*

(a) Write an essay on "The Curse of Slavery"

(b) Give Eliza's story, as told by herself

(c) Describe any other dramatic escape, either real or fictitious.

